

ART LEVINE EXPOSES THE
GOP'S WAR ON VOTING

DANIEL LEVY: A MIDDLE EAST
POLICY FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

OUR SPRING
BOOKS ISSUE

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

LIBERAL INTELLIGENCE

APRIL 2008

The Obama Doctrine

Barack Obama's
Challenge to
the Foreign Policy
Establishment

BY SPENCER
ACKERMAN

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

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"Give us the ballot!"

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., 1957

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Barack Obama's rejection of current U.S. foreign policy goes well beyond the war in Iraq. Together with his advisers, he's challenging long-held assumptions of the bipartisan foreign-policy establishment—and, above all, the fear that pervades the national-security discourse of both parties. If Obama is elected, these ideas and these thinkers will have the opportunity to reshape America's interactions with the world.
- 16 **The Next President and the Middle East** *by Daniel Levy*
To keep the world's tinder box from exploding even more violently, George W. Bush's successor is going to have to pursue a radically different Middle Eastern policy. The next president has to get out of Iraq, press for the establishment of a sustainable Palestine, distinguish between Islamists with remediable grievances (Hamas, probably) and those with none (al-Qaeda), and try to invest all Middle Eastern powers in the region's success.
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- 23 **The Republican War on Voting** *by Art Levine*
Ever since it took the Supreme Court to put Bush in the White House, one key Republican strategy for winning elections has been to suppress the vote of poor and minority Americans. Using the Department of Justice, friendly governors, and its usual propaganda outlets, the GOP has propagated the myth of voter fraud to purge the rolls of non-Republicans, prosecute nonexistent crimes, and pass laws requiring voter identification. The above-mentioned Supreme Court may soon uphold those laws. But organizations such as ACORN, which registers voters in the nation's ghettos and barrios, are fighting back. Research assistance for this article was provided by the Investigative Fund of the Nation Institute.

Cover art by John Ritter

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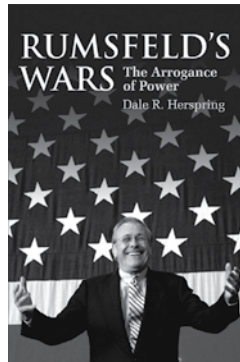
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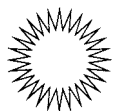
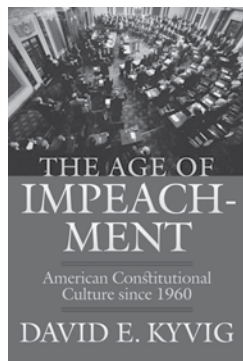
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New President, New Crisis

WHETHER THE NEXT PRESIDENT IS NAMED CLINTON, Obama, or McCain, the new chief executive will face an economic challenge unlike any since 1933. The new president will need to reject an entire failed paradigm of how the economy works and of government's role in it.

Since last summer, our private credit system has been unmasked as a series of interconnected Ponzi schemes. The reigning theory was that if government stepped aside, financial innovations would produce reliable, self-regulating prosperity. Instead, we got toxic financial bubbles, whose popping is now infecting our entire economy as credit contracts, while an administration still devoted to free markets watches helplessly.

Many senior people inside banking, business, and government regulatory agencies are more alarmed than they will say publicly. However, no official of the Bush administration will acknowledge how serious this financial crisis really is. Nor do most Democrats want to sound like Chicken Little—for the financial economy is a confidence game and nobody wants to be the Cassandra who triggers the crash. So for now, policy elites are publicly treating all this as just a modest bump in the road.

WHAT WOULD CLINTON OR OBAMA DO? Paul Krugman has relentlessly criticized Obama as too conservative. Seconding Krugman from the opposite quarter, Columbia University professor Jagdish Bhagwati, dean of academic free-market scolds, recently wrote in the *Financial Times* that Clinton has dangerous protectionist leanings, while Obama is the better free trader. Bhagwati lauded Obama's chief economic adviser, Austan Goolsbee, as "a valuable source of free-

trade advice over almost a decade." But "Mrs. Clinton's campaign boasts of no professional economist of high repute. Instead, her trade advisers are reputed to be largely from the pro-union, anti-globalization Economic Policy Institute and the AFL-CIO union federation."

This surely came as news to EPI and the AFL-CIO, which have gotten courtesy meetings and modest policy gestures but nothing more. And it doubtless brought smiles to the faces of Gene Sperling, Robert Rubin, and Roger Altman, the actual Clinton economic team. None is an academic, but two are leading Wall Street grandees.

What a choice! With one candidate, we get advisers who arrive at conventional economic wisdom via failed academic models. With the other, we get the same bad policies via Wall Street.

After the Great Crash, it took three agonizing years before the nation had the good fortune to elect Roosevelt, and a decade until the New Deal and the economic stimulus of war finally ended the Great Depression. This time, we are in both better and worse shape. On the plus side, the right did not succeed in repealing the entire New Deal. Thanks to deposit insurance, Social Security, a more activist Federal Reserve, and

federal spending of nearly 20 percent of gross domestic product, government can still play much more of a stabilizer role today than in 1929.

On the minus side, the bipartisan right did succeed in repealing far too much financial regulation, hence the current credit crisis; the U.S. is in hock to foreign creditors; the dollar is plunging; unemployment is rising; commodity prices are soaring; stagflation looms; trade policy serves financial elites rather than the nation; and the private financial system may need to be recapitalized, either by foreign governments that share few of our values, or by U.S. taxpayers.

Because of globalization, domestic recovery policy is constrained. As we all learned in high school, Roosevelt "took America off the gold standard," so that global deflationary pressures would not prevent FDR from using big deficits for domestic recovery. Today, opting out of global financial downdrafts is limited by our reliance on foreign borrowing.

Most seriously, we are still in thrall to bad ideas. A recovery program will require re-regulating capitalism nationally and globally. It will require massive public outlay. But these views remain at

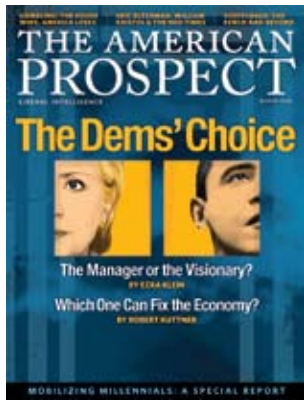
the margins of mainstream debate.

Which candidate is more capable of rejecting 30 years of failed free-market delusions and advisers like Rubin and Goolsbee? Obama, praised by Bhagwati, damned by Krugman, and rejected by many working-class voters in places like Ohio, is nonetheless still a work in progress. He seems temperamentally far more open to dramatic change. Clinton, by contrast, has been criticized as both a hopeless centrist and as an opportunist weather vane.

But she's no fool, and even a weather vane shifts with the gathering winds. Either Democrat would need to break radically with the elite consensus—or face a collapsing economy and a failed presidency. **TAP**

— ROBERT KUTTNER

*Recovery
will require
economic
strategies
that are at
the margins
of national
debate.*



High Stakes

BARBARA DREYFUSS' article "Politicians Bet the Farm" [March 2008] hits the important points on the problems with the rise in gambling.

Managing a regional economy is like filling a bathtub with the drain open. To grow, more dollars have to pour in from selling goods and services to other regions than drain out from purchases from other regions. Do casinos open the faucet and fill the tub or do they open the drain and empty the tub? This depends on where the casino revenues come from and how much of those revenues are spent locally.

In Philadelphia, roughly three-quarters of casino revenues are pulled out of the city with the vast majority of the revenues coming from local residents. This means that local businesses that recycle more dollars locally lose as people shift where they're spending and the jobs those businesses provide disappear. The result is a bigger drain and a net loss of jobs.

FREDERIC H. MURPHY
Professor,
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA

BARBARA DREYFUSS' recent characterization of casino expansion ignores countless studies demonstrating the positive impact of casinos.

Dreyfuss presents as fact the opinions of well-known casino opponents at the expense of independent, peer-reviewed research, which shows that casinos provide tax revenue, high-paying jobs, and infrastructure support for their host communities. It is inexcusable to ignore significant data merely because it contradicts the author's point of view.

FRANK J. FAHRENKOPF JR.
President and CEO,
American Gaming
Association

Dreyfuss responds: As Mr. Fahrenkopf states, there are narrowly focused studies showing casinos provide taxes and jobs in "their host communities," but these ignore negative effects on the broader regions. Casinos provide jobs and pay taxes but also increase crime and social problems. This, in turn, costs communities money for more police, court personnel, social services, and mental-health workers. And, when people spend their limited disposable income gambling, jobs and sales taxes are lost at the restaurants and retail shops they no longer patronize. The new, more comprehensive studies that I cited provide a more realistic assessment of how casinos impact a region. The fundamental issue, however, is whether government should promote gambling, with its economic and social costs, as a fiscal policy, rather than industries and services that add to the common good.

A Useful Crisis

I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY with Robert Kuttner's discussion of the nation's economy and the politics that should guide Democrats in dealing with it ["Can the Democrats Think Big?" March 2008].

On the other hand, a bit of a crisis might be useful, too. Ronald Reagan came into office when the economy was plagued by high inflation and unemployment. For 25 years Republicans have run up big deficits in order to: 1) prime the pump so supply-side tax cuts could work their "magic"; 2) buy votes for their side with spending and tax cuts; 3) force Democrats to adopt Republican balanced-budget fiscal policies when-

ever Dems captured the presidency or Congress; and 4) perhaps bankrupt the government so that Grover Norquist could drown it in the bathtub.

Democrats could take a page from the Republican's book. A real economic crisis right now might be useful in rolling back the Republican propaganda machine and convincing the public of the reality that government is necessary to any modern market economy.

ROBERT ABBOTT
Gilbert, AZ

Letters to the editor should be sent to letters@prospect.org or mailed to The Editors, The American Prospect, 2000 L St., NW, Suite 717, Washington, D.C. 20036.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

IT'S NOT ONLY BARACK OBAMA WHO OPPOSED THE IRAQ War from the start, Spencer Ackerman reports in our cover story this month. It's his entire foreign-policy team, whose members also share their candidate's belief that the Democrats' perennial search for a national-security sweet spot just a little less hawkish than the Republicans' results in an unthinking Beltway bipartisanship that seldom questions the use of American power, no matter how dubious. Ackerman profiles the foreign-policy counter-establishment that has cohered around Obama's candidacy and how it might change the way America interacts with the world.

Elsewhere in this issue, Daniel Levy outlines some radically new approaches that the next president will need to take to arrest the Middle East's ongoing descent into hell. Art Levine looks at the Republicans' many-front assault on the voting rights of non-Republicans, and the efforts of ACORN, the community organizing group, to sign up low-income voters while dodging the GOP's attacks. Historian Jay Winter recounts how the nations of Europe voluntarily surrendered some of their sovereignty after 1945 rather than risk another war. And *Prospect* co-founder Robert Reich notes some ominous similarities between the root causes of today's downturn and the root causes of the Great Depression—now as then, a distribution of income so skewed to the top that Americans can't afford to buy what we make. We've shopped, that is, till we've dropped.

— HAROLD MEYERSON

Up Front



THE BAD OLD DAYS

NOSTALGIA HAS ITS PURPOSES, BUT WHAT ON EARTH were the organizers of demonstrations being planned for this summer's national political conventions thinking when they named their group "Re-Create '68?" Bemoaning the "apathy in our community," they proclaimed their intention "to re-create that revolutionary feeling and pick up where our predecessors left off."

Would consciousness—not to mention, history—were so malleable! 1968, in fact, was a calamitous year for left and liberal ideals; what created much of that year's "revolutionary feeling" were the murders of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy and the defeat of the anti-war forces in the Democratic Party. This year, thankfully, hasn't seen any such disasters, and "apathy" doesn't seem a very apt description of young people's political mood, if the Obama campaign is any measure of that. Happily, the organizers and the convention cities' leaders do seem to have learned something from yesterday's debacles: Re-create '68 is working with the Denver and St. Paul city governments to ensure that things stay cool.

But the winner of this year's Dubious Nostalgia on the Left Award has to be Ralph Nader, who, in announcing yet again his run for president, seems bent on re-creating his triumphal (for Republicans) intervention of 2000. Still holding himself blameless for George W. Bush's election, Nader, like the Bourbons, has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. It's one thing not to learn from history, quite another to condemn us—as Nader quadrennially endeavors—to repeat it.

DEMOCRATIC UNITY

At this moment of tension and division within the Democratic Party, it's worth remembering that there are things that even the most sharp-elbowed insiders within the Clinton and Obama campaigns still agree on. Chiefly, they all loathe Mark Penn.

Hillary Clinton's chief strategist and pollster is hated and derided in the Obama camp and across a much broader swath of party leaders for his insistence on micro-triangulating policies and politics, his high-dollar arrogance, his (odd in a pollster) tone-deafness to public opinion. According to a story in *The Washington Post*, however, it turns out



he's hated throughout Clinton's circle of friends and advisers for the very same things. James Carville, Paul Begala, Rahm Emanuel, John Podesta, Harold Ickes, and Mandy Grunwald, the *Post* reports, can't stand him. Hillaryistas have repeatedly tried to persuade Hillary to fire Penn for, among other things, his unwillingness to embrace the idea that this is

a change election. To elucidate the working relationship Penn has with his colleagues, the *Post* quoted the following conference-call colloquy between senior campaign adviser Ickes and Penn: Ickes: "[Expletive] you!" Penn: "[Expletive] you!" Ickes: "[Expletive] you!"

So if, at this summer's Democratic convention, tensions between the Clinton and Obama camps reach fever pitch, convention chair Nancy Pelosi might want to entertain a motion that says, simply, "We hate Mark Penn." Nothing, apparently, could so quickly unify the party.

HOPE CHEST SPRINGS ETERNAL

In an effort to drum up sales of its annual "Luce Ladies" calendar (featuring conservative hotties like Michelle Malkin and Ann Coulter), the prim and proper ladies of the Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute, a right-wing anti-feminist think tank, have made college students an offer they will, in all likelihood, refuse. It promises to reward the co-ed who collects the most names for the institute's mailing list with her very own hope chest. You read that right—a hope chest, that relic of the 1950s, fully stocked with "dowry items" like bed linens and tea towels. All of the things a young conservative woman will want to assemble before she embarks on her career

**THE QUESTION:
WHAT OTHER
STORIES IS THE
NEW YORK TIMES
SITTING ON?**

"John McCain's new gig promoting Viagra."
—**Pam Spaulding**, editor, PamsHouse Blend.com



"Contra Charles Darwin, John McCain was created through intelligent design 4,000 years ago."
—**Matt Yglesias**, The Atlantic

"Barack Obama secretly wrote 'What's Going On?' when he was nine, and gave Smokey Robinson the main idea, but not all the chords, for 'You Really Got a Hold on Me' when he was two."
—**Eric Alterman**, The Nation

as a homemaker. The institute promises it's a "lovely spiced-up twist on your grandmother's trousseau." (No doubt it contains a daringly sexy pair of culottes for the wedding night?)

The Luce institute, however, may have slightly overestimated the demand among "modern American" college women for cedar boxes stuffed with doilies. The deadline for the contest has been extended, presumably due to lack of interest. The Lucees may have to find another way to get rid of those calendars.

THE COAL SHOULDER

Unsuspecting viewers who've turned on their televisions lately might infer that the coal industry dreads the prospect of comprehensive climate and energy legislation passing in the very near future. As if its sponsorship of every single debate in the presidential primary season wasn't enough, the industry has also taken to interrupting regularly scheduled evening programming with ads intended to convince viewers that coal is the power of the future. These ads have cost coal a cool \$35 million during this year's primary season.

This campaign is even worse in West Virginia, where the industry seems to have decided that the average resident is the intellectual equivalent of a five-year-old. Ads sponsored by

"Friends of Coal" and mining tools manufacturing company Caterpillar feature such cartoon characters as Mr. and Miss Bug, who assure viewers that coal is great for everyone and opponents are

crazy for thinking that coal mining destroys mountains and waterways. It's unclear whether this campaign is pitched to actual kindergarteners, whose awareness of coal is probably confined to

fears that Santa Claus will put it in their stockings, or if the coal meisters really think a cartoon insect is a way to appeal to the hearts and minds of West Virginian adults.

PARODY by T. A. Frank

"North Korean officials have invited the guitarist Eric Clapton to perform there, according to a representative for the North Korean Embassy in London."

—The New York Times, Feb. 27, 2008



Dear Esteemed Singing Friend Clapton:

The Korean people have long paid tribute to Comrade Clapton's revolutionary and soldierly approach to the electrical guitar, from his work with cream to his single-man, non-cream concoctions. The great defender of socialism Kim Jong-Il, in his famous work "Abuses of Socialism Are Intolerable," emphasizes that the Korean people must appreciate Comrade Clapton as a stalwart defender of the rock and blues in the face of reactionary imperialists such as Robert Plant.

In exchange for your appearance before the Korean masses, we shall offer 15 to 20 personal guides always on call and an audience with the Great Leader Comrade Kim Jong-Il and his friendly if slightly aggressive son Kim Jong Chol.

However, since the imperialists' anti-Juche campaign has reached a zenith, we must also suggest you defend socialism through selected editorial rectifications to your word-content in certain of your musical songs. We recommend the following titles: "Tears in Heaven, But Smiles and Laughter in the Workers' Paradise," "Cocaine—is a Dangerous Bourgeois Substance," and "General Secretary Kim Jong-Il Looks Wonderful Tonight."

Reviewing your so-called backstage rider request, we cannot accommodate your requests for the "Gatorade," the "Volvic," the Earl Grey (he is deceased), or the table of "foosball." We can, however, offer Komppoyaksul (bear-bone liquor), Totorisul (acorn liquor), Poyangju (chlorella liquor), a copy of Kim Jong-Il's latest work, "Respecting the Forerunners of the Revolution Is a Noble Moral Obligation of Revolutionaries," and a plate of cabbage.

With friendly wishes,
The Korean People's Cultural Ministry of Rock



Obama-ism Without Obama

BY MARK SCHMITT

WHETHER HE BECOMES PRESIDENT THIS YEAR, sometime in the future, or never, Barack Obama will surely stand as a distinctive and surprising figure in our political history. Yet as the lens pulls back, individuals who at first seem uniquely transformative almost always

come to be seen, more modestly, as reflections of their times, as products of trends and choices not of their own making. When Ronald Reagan was turning American politics on its head in 1980 and 1981, we saw Reagan, the man; today it is hardly revisionism to see Reagan as part of a long process of conservative reinvention and renewal, dating at least to Barry Goldwater's 1964 defeat, which created a role Reagan could step into.

Tomorrow's revisionist historians may see Obama's role this year in a similar light, as the culmination of a series of evolving ideas and conflicts over the last decade or two of progressive thought and action. Many of the threads that have become visible this year in Obama's campaign did not seem to amount to much at the time.

One trend is the emergence of a real democracy-minded reform movement—not just focused on limiting the role of money in politics but on expanding participation, broadening the scope of democracy, and connecting issues of process to substantive outcomes of public policy. Obama's conflict with John McCain over campaign finance reform is in some ways a subtle confrontation between this new movement and the older, upscale, good-government tradition, with its narrow, scolding tone. Obama's campaign highlights just how much was achieved in previous years through efforts to increase voter turnout, encourage small donors, and put issues such as media reform and pub-

lic financing of elections on the agenda.

While Obama has been loosely associated with this reform tradition, he was more closely involved with a second development: reconnecting community organizing with electoral politics and real power. The Chicago community-organizing tradition in which Obama worked was—much like the good-government reform tradition—apolitical, viewing elected officials with contempt and power with ambivalence. Electoral politics was divorced from the collective energy of community organizing. Obama was trying to bridge these gaps as early as his first campaign for state Senate in 1995, at one point asking, “What if a politician were to see his job as that of an organizer, as part teacher and part advocate?” and noting that the right had been more successful than the left at connecting grassroots mobilization to electoral power.

It's received little attention, but in recent years, enormous energy and money has gone into restructuring older community organizing groups to work together around a clear goal of electoral and legislative power. In Wisconsin, South Carolina, and Connecticut, venerable organizations with new leadership have found ways to work together, and it's probably no coincidence that these were states Obama won.

The third trend is one that Obama not only didn't have much to do with but one that he might seem to contradict. That is the emerging sense of a meaningful Democratic Party as a broad coalition with a coherent vision, not just an alliance of interest groups. The older model of the party was defined by checking off the boxes of what Sen. Joseph Lieberman called the “internal constituencies”—labor, environmental, civil-rights, and women's groups. Getting 100 percent on those groups' vote scorecards, Lieberman argued, should have been enough to validate any candidate.

The new model party, by contrast, champions an ambitious, transformational, coherent agenda, on issues such as health care, the economy, and foreign policy. With his language of cross-partisan pragmatism, Obama might seem far removed from this growing sense of party identification and ideological coherence. But in fact, Obama has succeeded without the overwhelming support of any of the traditional internal constituencies, something that would not have been possible in earlier years, while Hillary Clinton remains very much the “checklist liberal.”

This renewal of the Democratic Party as a coherent force would not have been possible without the transformative experience of six years of Republican rule, which broke down the ability of interest-group liberalism to function as it had. So the ultimate trend that created a role for Barack Obama as the bearer of the new Democratic purpose and ideology was, simply, the presidency of George W. Bush.

It may be that none of these trends are mature enough yet to bring about a transformation equivalent to 1980, but if we look away from the personality of Obama for a minute, we can see the near future of American politics in which Obama—or someone like him—may be the central figure. **TAP**

*Obama
personifies
progressive
changes that
have been
years in the
making.*

A Headache for Workers

BY DANA GOLDSTEIN

AS A LIFELONG MIGRAINE SUFFERER, I'M USED TO hearing comments denigrating the seriousness of the condition, as if the debilitating, chronic headaches endured by 28 million Americans (most of us women) were merely the result of hypochondria, or an excuse to skip an

awkward social engagement. But I never thought I'd hear those migraine myths perpetuated in the halls of Congress.

That's what happened in February when the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions met to consider the Department of Labor's proposed changes to the Family and Medical Leave Act, which was the first law President Bill Clinton signed after taking office in 1993. Thanks to the FMLA, many Americans have the right to 12 weeks of unpaid leave from work after the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a seriously ill family member, or to deal with their own chronic health problems—such as migraines.

As the clock runs down on George W. Bush's presidency and federal agencies scramble to enact pro-business policies, the Department of Labor (DOL) is doing its part by trying to weaken the FMLA. The DOL has seized upon a small number of employers' complaints about what is called "unscheduled, intermittent leave," which 60 million Americans have taken advantage of over the past 15 years. Under proposed new regulations, it would be more difficult for sick workers to take leave because they would be required to obtain a new doctor's certification of a chronic condition every year, even if they suffer from a lifelong illness such as diabetes or migraines. Such a change would be more than inconvenient; it discriminates against the 47 million Americans without health insurance, who pay out of

pocket for every visit to a doctor's office.

Even more ridiculously, the DOL wants to require employees to request unscheduled, intermittent leave two days in advance. As Sen. Chris Dodd, one of the original co-sponsors of the FMLA, said at the Senate committee hearing in February, "Medical emergencies aren't planned in advance." I, for one, certainly can't predict on Monday that I'll get a migraine on Wednesday.

In its crusade against sick leave, the DOL is ignoring the opinions of the very employers this policy is no doubt intended to benefit: 80 percent to 90 percent of employers in the DOL's own survey said the FMLA had a neutral or positive effect on productivity, profitability, and employee morale. But that hasn't stopped the conservative media and congressional Republicans from coming out swinging against FMLA. "Many employers have lost control of their workforce," fumed a *Wall Street Journal* editorial.

"Under current rules, workers can get an open-ended doctor's certificate for a condition—asthma, migraines, whatever—that allows them leave at any point."

A pro-DOL witness at the Senate hearing also seemed to have gotten the memo about belittling migraine patients. Kath-

ie Elliott, assistant director of employee relations at Central Michigan University, told the committee about an employee who took leave for migraines 76 times in a year. "Each [absence] was unscheduled and unanticipated," Elliott said.

That seems extreme, until you consider the realities of chronic pain. During severe times, I get as many as three migraines per week. If I took a half-day off for each migraine, I could run through my allotted FMLA leave in 10 months, just like the employee at Central Michigan. Like the vast majority of migraine sufferers, I try to work through my attacks. But I'm lucky to be assisted by comprehensive health insurance, the best neurological care, aggressive drug therapy, and a job that requires almost no physical endurance. If I had to stand all day at a checkout counter with a migraine, fighting nausea while I put on a happy face for customers, my life would be very different.

The DOL has cherry-picked evidence from an eight-year-old study to suggest that millions of workers are abusing FMLA. In fact, the larger problem is that millions who wish they could access leave can't, because they can't afford unpaid time off. That's why Dodd and Republican Sen. Ted Stevens have introduced

legislation that would give many workers the opportunity to take up to eight weeks of partially paid family or medical leave, covered by an insurance pool into which employers, workers, and government will all contribute.

The Dodd and Stevens proposal would bring the United States more in line with the rest of the developed world, where paid leave

is the norm. Since Bush would likely veto such legislation, it should be close to the top of the docket for the next president, regardless of his or her party. That would signal genuine support for family values and provide real relief for migraine patients like myself. **TAP**

As Sen. Chris Dodd said at a Senate committee hearing, "Medical emergencies aren't planned in advance."

The Obama Doctrine

Barack Obama is offering the most sweeping liberal foreign-policy critique we've heard from a serious presidential contender in decades. But will voters buy it?

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

When Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama met in California for the Jan. 31 debate, their back-and-forth resembled their many previous encounters, with the Democratic presidential hopefuls scrambling for the small policy yardage between them. And then Obama said something about the Iraq War that wasn't incremental at all. "I don't want to just end the war," he said, "but I want to end the mind-set that got us into war in the first place."

Until this point in the primaries, Clinton and Obama had sounded very similar on this issue. Despite their differences in the past (Obama opposed the war, while Clinton voted for it), both were calling for major troop withdrawals, with some residual force left behind to hedge against catastrophe. But Obama's concise declaration of intent at the debate upended this assumption. Clinton stumbled to find a counterargument, eventually saying her vote in October 2002 "was not authority for a pre-emptive war." Then she questioned Obama's ability to lead, saying that the Democratic nominee must have "the necessary credentials and gravitas for commander in chief."

If Clinton's response on Iraq sounds familiar, that's because it's structurally identical to the defensive crouch John Kerry assumed in 2004: Voting against the war wasn't a mistake; the mistakes were all George W. Bush's, and bringing the war to a responsible conclusion requires a wise man or woman with military credibility. In that debate, Obama offered an alternative path. Ending the war is only the first step. After we're out of Iraq, a corrosive mind-set will still be infecting the foreign-policy establishment and the body politic. That rot must be eliminated.

Obama is offering the most sweeping liberal foreign-policy critique we've heard from a serious presidential contender in decades. It cuts to the heart of traditional Democratic timidity. "It's time to reject the counsel that says the American people would rather have someone who is strong and wrong than someone who is weak and right," Obama said in a January speech. "It's time to say that we are the party that is going to be strong and right." (The Democrat who counseled that

Americans wanted someone strong and wrong, not weak and right? That was Bill Clinton in 2002.)

But to understand what Obama is proposing, it's important to ask: What, exactly, is the mind-set that led to the war? What will it mean to end it? And what will take its place?

To answer these questions, I spoke at length with Obama's foreign-policy brain trust, the advisers who will craft and implement a new global strategy if he wins the nomination and the general election. They envision a doctrine that first ends the politics of fear and then moves beyond a hollow, sloganeering "democracy promotion" agenda in favor of "dignity promotion," to fix the conditions of misery that breed anti-Americanism and prevent liberty, justice, and prosperity from taking root. An inextricable part of that doctrine is a relentless and thorough destruction of al-Qaeda. Is this hawkish? Is this dovish? It's both and neither—an overhaul not just of our foreign policy but of how we think about foreign policy. And it might just be the future of American global leadership.

WHEN CONSIDERING ANY PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL'S foreign-policy promises, it's important to remember that what candidates say is, at best, an imperfect guide to their actions in office. What proves to be a more reliable indicator of presidential behavior is a candidate's roster of advisers. (If the press had paid better attention, the country would have seen through Bush's pitch about a humble foreign policy and realized that many of his advisers, including Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, were conspiracy-minded warmongers.) Obama's foreign-policy advisers come from diverse backgrounds. They are former aides to Democratic mandarins like Tom Daschle and Lee Hamilton (Denis McDonough and Ben Rhodes, respectively); veterans of the Clinton administration's left flank (Tony Lake and Susan Rice); a human-rights advocate who helped write the Army's and Marine Corps' much-lauded counterinsurgency field manual (Sarah Sewall); a retired general who helped run the air war during the invasion of Iraq (Scott Gration); and a former journalist who revolutionized the study of U.S. foreign policy (Samantha Power). Yet they form a committed, intellectually coherent, and surprisingly united foreign-affairs team. (Shortly

before this piece went to press, Power resigned from the campaign after making an intemperate remark to a reporter.)

They also share a formative experience with each other and with Obama. Each opposed the Iraq War at a time when doing so was derided by their colleagues, by journalists, and by the foreign-policy establishment. Each did so because they understood that the invasion and occupation ran counter to the goal of destroying al-Qaeda. And each bore the frustration of endless lectures on their lack of so-called seriousness from those who suffered from strategic myopia.

“There is a popular notion that Democrats have to try to appear like Republicans to pass some test on national security. The fact that that’s still the case after Iraq is absurd,” says one of Obama’s closest advisers. “So you break from that orthodoxy and say ‘I don’t care if the Republicans attack me because I’m willing to meet with the leadership in Iran. We haven’t for 25 years, and it’s not gotten us anywhere.’”

aries of acceptable discourse set by the same establishment that backed the war. “This election is about ending the Iraq War, but even more it’s about moving beyond it. And we’re not going to be safe in a world of unconventional threats with the same old conventional thinking that got us into Iraq,” Obama said. One of his advisers, recalling the fallout from Obama’s comments about pursuing al-Qaeda in Pakistan, says, “He takes policy positions that are a break from both rigid orthodoxy and the Bush administration. And everyone says it’s a gaffe! That just encapsulates everything that’s wrong about the foreign-policy debate in Washington and in Democratic politics.”

The Obama foreign-policy team describes it as “the politics of fear,” a phrase most advisers used unprompted in our conversations. “For a long time we’ve not seen much creative thinking from Dems on national security, because, out of fear, we want to be a little different from the Republicans but not too different, out of fear of being labeled weak or indecisive,” another top



Most of the members of Obama’s foreign-policy team expressed frustration that they had taken a well-considered and seemingly anodyne position on Iraq and suffered for it. Obama had something similar happen to him in the spring and summer of 2007. He was attacked from the left *and* the right for saying three things that should not have been controversial: that if he had actionable intelligence on the whereabouts of al-Qaeda’s leadership in Pakistan but no cooperation from the Pakistani government, he would take out the jihadists; that he wouldn’t use nuclear weapons on terrorist training camps; and that he would be willing to meet with leaders of rogue states in his first year as president. “No one [of Obama’s critics] had thought through the policy because that was the quote-unquote naïve and weak position, so they said it was a bad position to take,” recalls Ben Rhodes, the adviser who writes Obama’s foreign-policy speeches. “And it was a seminal moment, because Obama himself said, ‘No, I’m right about this!’”

Instead of backing down, Obama asked his foreign-policy team to double down. Rhodes wrote a speech that Obama delivered at DePaul University on Oct. 2, which criticized the bound-

Flip the Script: Former Clinton administration National Security Adviser Tony Lake, former Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, Sen. Barack Obama, and retired Air Force Gen. Scott Graton participate in a foreign-policy campaign event in Des Moines, Iowa, on Dec. 18, 2007.

adviser says. Identifying that fear as the accelerant of the Iraq War mind-set is the first step to a new and innovative foreign policy. John Kerry was not able to argue for fundamental change in foreign policy because he was consumed by that very political fear. Obama’s admonition to Democrats is much like Pope John Paul II’s to the Gdansk shipyard strikers—first, be not afraid.

LIKE OBAMA, HIS DEFENSE ADVISERS have supplemented their American views with the perspectives of outsiders. Gen. Scott Graton, a retired Air Force jet pilot, says hello to me over the phone in Swahili. He learned about the crushing misery of the world’s poor by growing up in Congo, where his parents were missionaries. After the violence following Congolese independence in 1960, Graton had an experience few Americans ever will: He became a refugee. “We lost everything we owned, and what we took with us, they confiscated,” he remembers.

Sarah Sewall, a Harvard professor and another of Obama's closest advisers, also knows about stepping outside of her comfort zone. A longtime human-rights advocate with the disarmament organization, the Council for a Livable World, Sewall found herself in 2005 and 2006 with an unlikely partner: Gen. David Petraeus. He and two colleagues were rewriting the Army and Marine field manual for counterinsurgency and wanted Sewall's input on how to create a more just, humane, and successful doctrine. For agreeing to help, she was attacked by some on the left. "Should a human-rights center at the nation's most prestigious university be collaborating with the top U.S. general in Iraq in designing the counterinsurgency doctrine behind the current military surge?" Tom Hayden wrote online in *The Huffington Post*.

Sewall's involvement may have lost her some influence within the academic left, but she has become a hero to the military's growing circle of counterinsurgency theorist-practitioners. "Her impact on the thinking about the war and the conduct of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been significant and not without cost," says Army Lt. Col. John Nagl, one of the counterinsurgency community's luminaries. "She has shown, in my eyes, great moral courage. I think Senator Obama is listening to someone who has thought long and hard about the use of force and who understands the kinds of wars we're fighting today."

This ability to see the world from different perspectives informs what the Obama team hopes will replace the Iraq War mind-set: something they call dignity promotion. "I don't think anyone in the foreign-policy community has as much an appreciation of the value of dignity as Obama does," says Samantha Power, a former key aide and author of the groundbreaking study of U.S. foreign policy and genocide, *A Problem From Hell*. "Dignity is a way to unite a lot of different strands [of foreign-policy thinking]," she says. "If you start with that, it explains why it's not enough to spend \$3 billion on refugee camps in Darfur, because the way those people are living is not the way they want to live. It's not a human way to live. It's graceless—an affront to your sense of dignity."

During Bush's second term, a strange disconnect has arisen in liberal foreign-policy circles in response to the president's so-called "freedom agenda." Some liberals, like Matthew Yglesias in his book *Heads In The Sand*, note the insincerity of the administration's stated goal of exporting democracy. Bush, they observe, only targets for democratization countries that challenge American hegemony. Other liberal foreign-policy types, such as Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, insist the administration is sincere but too focused on elections without supporting the civil-society institutions that sustain democracy. Still others, like Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch, contend that a focus on democracy in the developing world without privileging the protection of civil and political rights is a recipe for a dangerous illiberalism.

What's typically neglected in these arguments is the simple insight that democracy does not fill stomachs, alleviate malaria, or protect neighborhoods from marauding bands of militiamen. Democracy, in other words, is valuable to people

"There is a popular notion that Democrats have to try to appear like Republicans to pass some test on national security. The fact that that's still the case after Iraq is absurd," says one of Obama's closest advisers.

insofar as it allows them first to meet their basic needs. It is much harder to provide that sense of dignity than to hold an election in Baghdad or Gaza and declare oneself shocked when illiberal forces triumph. "Look at why the baddies win these elections," Power says. "It's because [populations are] living in climates of fear." U.S. policy, she continues, should be "about meeting people where they're at. Their fears of going hungry, or of the thug on the street. That's the swamp that needs draining. If we're to compete with extremism, we have to be able to provide these things that we're not [providing]."

This is why, Obama's advisers argue, national security depends in large part on dignity promotion. Without it, the U.S. will never be able to destroy al-Qaeda. Extremists will forever be able to demagogue conditions of misery, making continued U.S. involvement in asymmetric warfare an increasingly counterproductive exercise—because killing one terrorist creates five more in his place. "It's about attacking pools of potential terrorism around the globe," Gration says. "Look at Africa, with 900 million people, half of whom are under 18. I'm concerned that unless you start creating jobs and livelihoods we will have real big problems on our hands in ten to fifteen years."

Obama sees this as more than a global charity program; it is the anvil against which he can bring down the hammer on al-Qaeda. "He took many of the [counterinsurgency] principles—the paradoxes, like how sometimes you're less secure the more force is used—and looked at it from a more strategic perspective," Sewall says. "His policies deal with root causes but do not misconstrue root causes as a simple fix. He recognizes that you need to pursue a parallel anti-terrorism [course] in its traditional form along with this transformed approach to foreign policy." Not for nothing has Obama received private advice or public support from experts like former Clinton and Bush counterterrorism advisers Richard Clarke and Rand Beers, and John Brennan, the first chief of the National Counterterrorism Center.

The Obama foreign-affairs brain trust balks at the suggestion that what it's proposing is radical. "He said we'd take out al-Qaeda's senior leadership in the Pakistani tribal areas if Pakistan will not. That's not, to me, a revolutionary policy," Rhodes says. "Watching him get attacked on the right is absurd. You've got guys who argued for a massive invasion and occupation of a country that had nothing to do with 9-11

criticizing him for advocating the use of highly targeted force to kill Osama bin Laden!"

Rhodes is referring, of course, to John McCain, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, who recently asked of Obama, "Will we risk the confused leadership of an inexperienced candidate who once suggested invading our ally, Pakistan?" It's no secret that McCain, a war hero who is to the right of Bush when it comes to Iraq, hopes to make this a foreign-policy election. Conventional wisdom holds this would give him an advantage over Obama. A Feb. 28 Pew Research Center poll found 43 percent of respondents believe Obama is "not tough enough" on foreign policy. Thirty-nine percent believe Obama's foreign policy is "just right," while 47 percent say the same of McCain.

Even so, Obama's foreign-policy advisers are thrilled at the prospect of facing McCain. Had the GOP nomination gone to Mitt Romney or Mike Huckabee, politicians who don't particularly care about foreign policy, an Obama victory would not provide a mandate for the sweeping foreign-affairs overhaul his campaign proposes. November's election could be, for the first time in a very long time, a choice between two radically different visions of U.S. global engagement. "We *want* to have this debate with John McCain," a close Obama adviser says. "[Obama] will offer this clear contrast."

Susan Rice, an assistant secretary of state in the Clinton administration and one of the few foreign-policy-establishment luminaries to sign on with Obama, explains what's at stake: "After eight years of George Bush, when the next president puts his or her hand on the Bible to be sworn in, the U.S. is going to get one brief second look [from the world] about whether the U.S. truly learned to change from its past mistakes, recent and historic, and whether we're again the kind of America people look to lead in a constructive fashion, or whether we're hopeless. In my opinion, they'll look at McCain and decide we're trapped in our old mistakes."

Of course, it remains to be seen how *voters* might look at an Obama-McCain race. "The important distinction will be, does Obama come across as saying he wants to make a break with the foreign policy of the last seven years, or does it sound like he'll take foreign policy in a fundamentally different direction than that of the last twenty, thirty, fifty years?" says Guy Molyneux, a Democratic pollster with Peter D. Hart Associates. Americans are eager to put the Bush doctrine behind them, Molyneux says, but there's a danger that voters will see Obama as a "young guy who's less experienced but sounds like he's taking off in a new direction."

IN HIS FOCUS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGNITY in our policy toward the developing world, Obama sounds quite a bit like John F. Kennedy, who knitted together an argument for engagement with the "non-aligned" world and began the tradition of development assistance as a foreign-policy goal. However, Kennedy's basic foreign policy continued along the Cold War lines that had been laid down during the Truman administration.

Democratic presidential candidates since Kennedy have either downplayed foreign policy or simply argued for more

competence in its execution, with two major exceptions: George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter in 1976. In the popular imagination, based on the "Come home, America" line from his nomination acceptance speech, McGovern pivoted from a striking critique of the immorality of the Vietnam War to an indictment of U.S. involvement abroad. But McGovern purposefully left this broad criticism out of most of his campaign. "I concentrated on Vietnam," McGovern says in a phone interview, "because I thought it would be difficult to sell a comprehensive rewriting of American foreign policy." Carter is a more ambiguous case. In the wake of Watergate, he made a full-spectrum argument against the Washington establishment. Rethinking foreign policy was a part of that, and his aide Hamilton Jordan remarked, "If, after the inauguration, you find Cy Vance as secretary of state and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of national security, then I would say we failed." Both men, of course, received precisely those posts.

Obama is doing something braver with foreign policy than McGovern or Carter. Much, of course, could go wrong. Right-wing demagogues are already implying Obama is a Muslim terrorist. Conservatives are using Obama's argument about the inextricability of international prosperity and U.S. national security to portray him as a "post-American globalist." Jewish right-wingers in the U.S. have begun a smear campaign not just about Obama, but also about Power, as writers for *Commentary* and *National Review* have baselessly implied that she is an anti-Semite. Expect more of this for the duration of the primary season, and, if Obama wins, beyond.

If he wins in the general election, he will face a crush of foreign-policy problems so enormous that they risk overwhelming even the most competent, experienced national-security team. Iraq is, of course, a nightmare, and al-Qaeda is not just sitting still in its Pakistani safe haven. To propose rebooting U.S. foreign policy now is, to say the least, ambitious. Many military leaders consider Obama an unknown quantity. At a recent talk, *Washington Post* correspondent Thomas Ricks said that officers and soldiers serving in Iraq thought that McCain and Clinton would both pursue a foreign-policy commensurate with Bush's, but Obama left them puzzled. Once in office, Obama might feel compelled to turn his back on the critique he makes on the trail.

But while the doubts about Obama contain fair points, they also, to a certain degree, reflect a triumph of the Iraq War mind-set. Why *not* demand the destruction of al-Qaeda? Why *not* pursue the enlightened global leadership promised by liberal internationalism? Why *not* abandon fear? What *is* it we have to fear, exactly?

"He goes back to Roosevelt," Power says. "Freedom from fear and freedom from want. What if we actually offered that? What if we delivered that in the developing world? That would be a *transformative* agenda for us." The end of the Iraq War mind-set, it turns out, may be the beginning of America's reacquaintance with its best traditions. **TAP**

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The Next President and the Middle East

Some policy pointers: Get out of Iraq. Work with (some) Islamists. Create the Palestinian state. Thereby, undercut al-Qaeda.

BY DANIEL LEVY

Listen carefully when a new president is inaugurated next January for the sigh of relief coming from most of those Middle Easterners whom President Bush embraced as allies. Conversely, Bush's rivals in the region are likely to tune in to the occasion in a disgruntled mood. For them the Bush years have been good for business. The menu of grievances on which they've fed has become a veritable feast. Opposition to American designs in the region—deployed with different emphases and with different goals by al-Qaeda, Iran, Hamas, Syria, and Hezbollah, to name but a few—has been an easy sell and has won countless new adherents.

To be a friend of “Bush the Younger” in Arabia has not been such a comfortable disposition. Even the Israelis have begun to recognize the limited utility of a president, despite all his words of support, who is so vilified abroad and divisive at home that coalition-building and agenda-advancement are beyond him.

A new president can expect to be greeted by an initial spike in America's standing in public opinion polls both globally and in the Middle East. This phenomenon will likely be magnified if a Democrat is in the White House and further embellished if that Democrat is Barack Obama. There will be a honeymoon period of openness, of a willingness to suspend judgment and to look again at America and what it stands for.

But the next administration will inherit a regional mess that will require more than some presidential goodwill and an image makeover. The president's Middle East inbox will include Iraq, Iran, al-Qaeda, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and much more. Set alongside this, even health-care reform may take on the appearance of low-hanging fruit.

The temptation will be to focus on improving the mechanics of making and implementing decisions and treating each problem separately, with various regional issues being compartmentalized. Some cosmetic changes might also be thrown in. One could envisage, for instance, the appointment of a special envoy to oversee an Iraq international support group and another for the Middle East peace process. That first appointment would be new; the latter has not existed for the past eight years, and

its reintroduction would signal serious intent. A new American ambassador could be appointed to Damascus, symbolizing re-engagement in dialogue with adversaries. The last ambassador, Margaret Scobey, was recalled from Syria on Feb. 15, 2005, after the assassination of Rafik Hariri in Lebanon.

Such moves should be welcomed and might even be helpful, but capacity and cosmetics are just the beginning. As Daniel Kurtzer, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and Egypt, concludes in a recent article, “better a policy without an envoy than an envoy without a policy.”

Policies will have to change. But so too will the framework of understanding from which those policies are derived. Take, as an example, the Israeli-Palestinian Annapolis peace process, launched in November 2007. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice managed to lead a change in policy within the administration and to renew efforts toward a permanent-status peace deal after a seven-year hiatus. She probably deserves credit for even getting this far, but the Annapolis process was straitjacketed from the start by its framing. Even when a breakthrough document on Israeli-Palestinian peace has become a priority, the kinds of policy initiatives that could lead to this goal were rejected at the outset for ideological reasons. Just before the Annapolis gathering, 66 former U.S. senior officials and experts, spearheaded by Brent Scowcroft, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Lee Hamilton, sent a letter to the president and secretary of state welcoming the new effort and counseling that an “inclusive” process that would involve (even indirectly) and incentivize actors such as Syria and Hamas would be much more likely to succeed than one that excluded them. (In the interest of full disclosure, the New America Foundation—my employer—and I were involved in organizing and promoting this letter.) That counsel was not heeded. Syria was indeed invited but not engaged. The policy—no peace effort—was changed, but the framing—Israel/Palestine is part of the war on terror, so one must isolate Islamists, Iran, and their ilk—remained the same. The Annapolis exercise was thereby handicapped from the start.

Similarly on Iraq, Rice moved to engage with all the neighboring nations in February 2007, but within a mandate so nar-



Burning Bush: Palestinians display their anti-American sentiments.

row that it severely limited the regional push for a settlement in Iraq. At the micro-level, the U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq (and Afghanistan) successfully demanded that they be authorized to work with a broad cross section of local actors, including those with problematic histories and Islamist credentials. Likewise, the increasing reliance of U.S. forces on local Sunni Awakening Councils was a new direction. However, none of this led to a reframing of the narrative at the meta-level. The U.S. view on whom to bring into the Iraqi political dialogue—from both inside and outside the country—remained prohibitively blinkered. As a result, political progress remains painfully elusive.

Iraq's more troublesome neighbors, some U.S. allies, some not (Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the former camp, Iran and Syria in the latter), cannot wave a wand and magically end the Mesopotamia mess. They can be instrumental, though, in helping to stabilize the situation. That requires incentives, constant prodding, and a comprehensive rethink from the U.S.

Accordingly, a new administration Middle Eastern “to do” list that amounts just to isolating the issues, managing the processes efficiently, keeping ambitions modest, and throwing everything at Iraq, would be wholly inadequate to the task ahead. The first priority should be to connect the dots of regional issues to reflect the realities and interdependencies on the ground. One cannot solve anything in the Middle East (including Iraq) without looking afresh and trying to solve just about everything.

Change must begin at the Department of Deep Narrative

Framing (DDNF). Absent a new narrative for the Middle East, a Democratic administration will inexorably, even unintentionally, slide into the grip of the liberal hawks. The equation will look something like this: unreconstructed narrative + good liberal interventionist inclinations = a more competent (perhaps) but equally misguided (and perhaps therefore even more dangerous) version of neoconservatism, albeit wrapped in a more palatable sales pitch. If the Democrats seize the reins of government next January, they should not forget to grab control of the DDNF. Barack Obama's claim that he would not only “end the war in Iraq” but also “end the mind-set that got us into that war” indicates that one candidate at least is eyeing up the DDNF for change. What might a reshuffle at the department produce?

Start by redrawing that map of issue interconnectivity, retiring the current war on terror paradigm, and rethinking the appeal to hearts and minds. Cranking up the use of soft power and aid programs and reducing the military footprint is not enough. At least three epiphanies are required of the next president to go forward: First, recognize that certain widely held grievances in the Middle East—the Palestinians' most particularly—are both legitimate and solvable. Second, understand that political Islamists are not all the same, are not all al-Qaeda, and that building a policy based on these differences is crucial to resolving the region's problems. And third, comprehend that regional stability demands inclusivity and a commitment to multilateralism.

The global war on terror and the democratization narratives that the Bush administration has propagated are irredeemably discredited in the Middle East. They are most commonly seen as a war on Islam and a hypocritical and inconsistent application of a “freedom” agenda that protects autocratic friends and punishes democratic opponents.

A recent sporting episode demonstrates the global resonance of a grievance largely ignored in the U.S. The Africa Nations Cup, a continent-wide biannual soccer tournament (a mini World Cup) was hosted in Ghana this January and February. Egypt emerged victorious, guaranteeing massive interest not only throughout Africa but also across the Middle East on the Arabic satellite channels. The matches coincided with the Gaza siege and Rafah border breakout, and on scoring the tournament's winning goal, Egypt's star striker, Mohamed Aboutrika, lifted his national team jersey to reveal a T-shirt bearing the inscription, in English and Arabic, “Sympathize with Gaza.” America's media was totally oblivious to these goings-on, but for vast areas of our world this simple gesture of solidarity echoed louder than a dozen presidential speeches about why the Palestinians must first recognize their Israeli occupiers and reject the Hamas party that they voted for in free elections.

Travel almost anywhere in the Arab or Muslim world and you will hear the same refrain, including from America's most ardent friends in the business community and civil society: “Why do you allow or even encourage such things to happen to the Palestinian people? How can we stand with you on this?”

Most Middle Easterners who have no sympathy with al-Qaeda and extremism do nonetheless identify with the Palestinians' grievances. The sense of U.S. indifference to such grievances and

unwillingness to address them is a source of great sustenance to al-Qaeda and its ilk. Recognizing and removing those grievances, where possible, has to be part of an effective al-Qaeda push-back strategy. It has not been thus far.

That does not require abandoning Israel. It does mean delivering on a decent and viable two-state solution that is already, for what it's worth, official U.S. and Israeli policy. Implementing this perspective does not guarantee that al-Qaeda will disappear overnight. Much of the swamp of anger from which it draws support and recruits will be drained, however, and al-Qaeda-type groups will have to then appeal to a set of grievances that have far less resonance.

The DDNF must also stop viewing political Islamists as one undifferentiated sea of green hostility. This view is utterly self-defeating, artificially increasing the size of the enemy while unnecessarily limiting the pool of potential allies. It also displays a woeful ignorance of the internal debates and harsh fissures among Islamist groups. What has happened locally and of necessity in developing a more discerning approach to Islamists in Iraq and Afghanistan must percolate to the level of big-picture framing.

Finally, the DDNF's directives must begin to build a new and inclusive regional security architecture. As a prerequisite the U.S. should both repair its image as an international leader that plays by the rules (no Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, or extraordinary renditions) and that embraces multilateralism. Ultimately, the region in general (and post-Iraq stability in particular) requires a security framework that makes stakeholders of all the major actors. That will take time, but as policies shift from "no talking to bad guys" to "tough problem-solving diplomacy," so the language of "axes of evil" and "pariah states" should be buried.

Even adversaries have legitimate interests. Accept these, reject what is illegitimate, and build buy-in from the broadest array of regional actors.

In reality, of course, there is no government department known as the DDNF (at least not since Doug Feith retired). There is, though, an echo chamber, which can amplify the new president's perspectives and facilitate a new approach to the Middle East.

How would this translate into specific areas of policy content and presentation? Here are a few ideas.

The new president should dust off one Bush-era relic and reconvene the members of the Iraq Study Group for a widely publicized final meeting. The theater of the occasion would broadcast that the new policies are solidly rooted in the findings of a grand, bipartisan group, whose recommendations were ignored by an excessively partisan predecessor. The ISG report recognized that "all key issues [in the Middle East] are inextricably linked." It argued for unconditional engagement with Syria and Iran and pushed for a diplomatic surge. Despite a costly two-year delay, the time would arrive for the "New Diplomatic Offensive" envisaged by Baker, Hamilton, and Co. Even the name, New Diplomatic Offensive, might be worth recycling.

Some might see America's Israeli relationship as the Achilles' heel of the new strategy. It need not be. The new president

would be well advised to explain early and often how the policy shift would protect and carry forward the U.S.-Israel special relationship. Indeed, it's the policy of "more of the same" that threatens that relationship. For almost a decade the Israeli consensus has been to accept the creation of a Palestinian state. That now needs to happen, urgently, on reasonable terms and with attention to Israel's real security concerns. Israel also has an interest in strengthening America's regional standing and coalition-building capacity, something the U.S. cannot do until it addresses the Palestinian predicament. The challenges that America, Israel, and others face, from al-Qaeda's successful attacks in Jordan and the Egyptian Sinai to its putative presence in Lebanon and Gaza to the threat of growing instability and weapons proliferation—all this and more should no longer be overshadowed by an argument over a few kilometers of land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. America



Soccer Solidarity: Egyptian star striker Mohamed Aboutrika celebrates a goal.

should work closely with Israel in designing a new regional security architecture. Even if Benjamin Netanyahu is again Israel's prime minister in January 2009, it is worth remembering that he, too, often with American encouragement, handed over land, shook the hand of Chairman Arafat, and secretly negotiated with Syria. Israel would be a beneficiary of the new U.S. policy even if some might be reluctant to accept it.

Turning to Iraq, the U.S. should not isolate that nation's challenges from others in the region. It should not be blaming Iraqis for their inadequacies, nor arming various sides for a potentially bloodier phase of the civil war. The new president needs to state clearly America's commitment to end the military deployment that began in March 2003, and pledge not to maintain military bases there. This policy would focus the thinking of Iraqi factions on the political compromises necessary in a post-occupation Iraq. Second, the U.S. should make an "outside in" effort with all of Iraq's neighbors to create the optimal conditions for externally assisted stabilization.

This regional rethink would come at a delicate time in the Iranian election calendar. Iran's presidential ballot is scheduled for June 2009, and nothing should be done in the preceding months that might strengthen Ahmadinejad—neither saber-rattling nor White House invitations. Better to sit this

one out. The most elegant proposal would be to announce a six- to 12-month policy review on Iran—avoiding heavy-handed (and probably counterproductive) election interference while gently hinting at future possibilities. After elections, and almost regardless of the results, the new administration should test the option of an unconditional and multi-issue political dialogue. The kind of grand bargain that was apparently offered by Iran and summarily rejected by the U.S. in 2003 (well documented by Flynt Leverett among others), should be re-examined. Israel's former Mossad chief, Efraim Halevy, an advocate of hard negotiations with Iran, has argued that religious regimes can be the most flexible of creatures, as God is always with them whatever they decide. If a grand bargain or even ad-hoc understandings are unattainable, then Iran's regional reach can be challenged more effectively by trying to bring actors like Syria and Hamas inside the tent. The peace process and Gulf policy should not be Irano-centric, thereby magnifying Iranian pretensions to hegemony. Containment and mutual deterrence, not pre-emptive military action, must be the fallback policy should all else fail.

The sense of U.S. indifference to Palestinian grievances is a source of great sustenance to al-Qaeda and its ilk.

Iranian cooperation would have immediate repercussions in the Lebanon-Syria arena. Bush's policy exacerbated Lebanese internal divisions, eschewed any incentives for Syrian good behavior and discouraged the resumption of Israeli-Syrian talks. In the Israel-Lebanon-Syria triangle the U.S. was part of the problem, not part of the solution. Loyalty to the Cedar Revolution assumed a higher priority than prevention of a renewed Lebanese civil war. The new president should be guided by the principle of no return to Syrian occupation of Lebanon. Beyond that, America needs the good sense to allow flexibility on the Hariri Tribunal if there are important quid pro quo's to be gained. Its strategic objectives should be to promote internal accommodation, not conflict within Lebanon, to renew Israeli-Syrian negotiations, and to resume its own high-level bilateral dialogue with Syria.

The hobby of regime change should also be abandoned on the Palestinian front. The Bush administration made a dizzying three attempts at shaping the Palestinian Authority leadership. The end result is a Palestinian house so divided that it complicates peace efforts, perhaps fatally, and weakens the political as opposed to militant tendency within Hamas. The opportunity presented by a Palestinian government of national unity, with Hamas endorsing both a ceasefire and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, needs to be resurrected in some fashion.

Recalibrating policy toward Hamas has become central to progress on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Con-

trary to popular misperception, Hamas and al-Qaeda are adversaries, not allies. Hamas is about ending the occupation and reforming Palestinian society; al-Qaeda, about opposing the West per se and spreading chaos in the Muslim world and beyond. One is reformist, the other revolutionary; one nationalist, the other post-nationalist; one grievance-based, the other fundamentalist. Hamas has signaled that it will accept a Palestinian state alongside Israel. It can be worked with, albeit indirectly for political reasons. Under a new administration, U.S. policy toward Hamas should enter a period of deniable ambiguity, as third parties (principally Arab and European) explore a series of propositions with the Hamas leadership.

The Hamas question, though, is about more than the West Bank and Gaza. It touches on whether political Islamists, the Muslim Brothers among them, can be allies and even play a pivotal role in the struggle against al-Qaeda. These non-takfiri Islamists (takfiris, al-Qaeda among them, support an extreme interpretation of Islam, and offensive, not defensive, Jihad) are embroiled in their own bitter fight with the radicals. Democratic Islamists tend to be the big winners when free elections are held in the Arab world, and their very participation in such elections is considered kufr—an abomination to Islam—by the takfiri jihadists. They are religiously conservative, sometimes oppressively so, but they are not at war with the West, and America's unwillingness to enter into a dialogue with them over rules of the game for co-existing and rooting out al-Qaeda has been perhaps the most glaring and stubbornly shortsighted omission in U.S. post-September 11 policy.

These divisions within political Islam are an unexploited opportunity. Lumping all Islamists together is politically and intellectually lazy and dishonest, helping al-Qaeda to portray America as anti-Muslim. It also exacerbates American reliance on repressive regimes fearful of democratic elections that might displace them. The reality is that most Islamists are mainstream, non-takfiri. At the very least, the alternative of a dialogue with non-takfiri political Islam should be explored. Can, for instance, the Turkish model of an Islamic but pro-Western polity be reproduced in the Arab world, and if so, under what circumstances? Which is why a blue-ribbon commission on "Reducing al-Qaeda and Takfiri Influence in Islamic Societies" should be constituted to report to the new president by autumn 2009.

A triangle can be drawn on the map of the world that runs from the Hindu Kush to the Atlantic Coast of Morocco to the Horn of Africa. I haven't touched on all the problems in that triangle—Pakistan and Afghanistan or energy policy, for instance. Nor does that triangle encompass all of the Muslim world. This triangle contains only about 6 percent of the planet's population. The next president will have to focus on relations with China, protecting our environment, and tackling global human security, and rightly so. But this triangle, if irresponsibly managed, has a proven ability to suck America in and leave little oxygen for anything else. But that's a fate the next president can avoid. **TAP**

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Populism Rising

Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton may be neophyte class warriors, but their populism is more than just rhetorical—and must be, if the Democrats are to win the election and govern successfully.

BY ROBERT BOROSAGE

“**T**he oil companies, the predatory student loan companies, the insurance companies, and the drug companies have had seven years of a president who stands up for them. I intend to be a president who stands up for all of you.”

The last ad of the late Sen. Paul Wellstone, the populist battler from Minnesota? Not quite—it’s a Hillary Clinton ad in Ohio. The candidate *Fortune* magazine hailed as Wall Street’s favorite is even more populist on the stump.

Or consider this riff: “We need a president who will listen not just to Wall Street but to Main Street.” The reason, the speaker warns, is that powerful special interests have taken over Washington. “It’s a Washington where decades of trade deals like NAFTA and [like with] China have been signed with plenty of protections for corporations and their profits, but none for our environment or our workers who’ve seen factories shut their doors and millions of jobs disappear—workers whose right to organize and unionize has been under assault for the last eight years.”

John Edwards in full swing in Iowa? No, this is Barack Obama, the “hope monger,” in Janesville, Wisconsin.

John Edwards is gone, but his populist rhetoric and agenda hold center stage in the Democratic presidential race. The Democratic race has come down to Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, two relatively cautious moderates, tutored by Citigroup’s Robert Rubin and his Wall Street-funded Hamilton Project, who have nonetheless both become unlikely populist scourges as the primary season rolled on.

Their conversion elicits a well-grounded cynicism. To the press, it’s not populism reborn but situational ethics. The rhetoric ratcheted up as the primaries hit Wisconsin and Ohio, industrial states battered by the loss of manufacturing jobs. Obama had to cut into Clinton’s hold on blue-collar families; Clinton had to consolidate and expand her margins in that base.

No question that Midwest voters are looking for a populist champion. Ohio suffers what Jesse Jackson termed the “trifecta of devastation.” It has lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000. It never enjoyed the housing boom but is nonetheless the center of the collapse. In January, the Department

of Housing and Urban Development sold homes in Cleveland for less than the price of a latte at Starbucks. The state is disfigured by the long-term poverty of its inner cities and rural Appalachian counties. Even John McCain started talking about creating jobs when he got to Ohio.

But the situation generating this populism isn’t limited to Ohio. America has lost one in five manufacturing jobs under George Bush. The median wage has lost ground, while prices in basics—gas, home heating, health-care premiums, college tuitions—have soared. One in 10 homes across the country are now “under water,” worth less than their mortgages. Nationally, we have to borrow or sell off assets worth \$2 billion a day to foreigners to cover our trade deficits.

This can’t go on, as Americans well understand. Pessimism is rising about their children’s futures, and an increasing majority see globalization as negative. Large majorities say Washington has been captured by the wealthy and entrenched corporate lobbies, crippled by partisan posturing and political bickering, and simply doesn’t work for them.

The populism of Obama and Clinton doesn’t speak just to the angry blue-collar workers of Youngstown and Toledo. It finds an audience across the country, one that will only grow as this economy gets worse, which it surely will.

Similarly, that populism reflects not simply the concerns of the Democratic Party base that votes in primaries; it speaks to the new majority that Democrats are forging to win elections. Labor’s energized political program now reaches the one in four voters who come from union households. Single women constitute 25 percent of the potential electorate, and when they vote, they vote overwhelmingly Democratic. Both groups are focused on economic concerns. People of color are hardest hit by both the recession and the housing collapse. Young people, the largest generation of all, oppose the war, care about the environment, but are struggling with lower wages, and college graduates are struggling with the burdens of debt. The broad middle class is under increasing pressure. Clinton and Obama aren’t just posturing. Mugged by economic realities and sobered by the swing of national opinion, the eventual Democratic nominee will have won with a strong populist argument.

Edwards drove the populist agenda when he was in the race, but part of his frustration was that Obama and Clinton covered his every move. Both champion a far bolder agenda than they started with.

Think about the elements of a populist progressive economic strategy. We'd push for a bold public-investment agenda to get the economy going. Both Obama and Clinton have called for a concerted drive for energy independence, generating millions of new "green collar" jobs by investing in renewable energy and conservation. Both have called for an infrastructure-development bank, enabling infrastructure investment to break the shackles of the yearly budget constraints. Both have called for ending the war and using some of the \$12 billion a month being spent on it to rebuild America. Both call for investing in education and making college and advanced training more affordable.

We'd want a new trade strategy that focused on workers here and abroad, not companies, with a strategy for the nation, not multinationals. Both Clinton and Obama have pledged no more trade accords without enforceable labor rights and environmental protections. Both have called for revoking tax breaks that reward companies for moving jobs abroad. Both voted against fast-track authority and have signed onto legislation challenging China's currency manipulation.

We progressives would demand that rising profits and productivity be widely shared, not simply pocketed by the top floor. And we'd push for a public social contract to replace the private sector's promises—health care, paid vacations, pensions—now being abandoned by corporations. Both Clinton and Obama have called for a national health-care plan, with increased taxes on the wealthy to pay for it. Both have called for legislation that empowers workers to organize and that cracks down on companies trampling worker rights. ("People sometimes ask me," Clinton says, "when you are president will labor have a seat at the table? Here's my answer—labor built that table.")

The limits of Clinton's and Obama's progressive populism are apparent; Dennis Kucinich they aren't. Many wonder what portions of this agenda they would actually fight for if elected. Their top-end tax increases merely roll back the Bush cuts, falling short of the level of progressive taxes we'll need to rebuild the middle class. Their investment agenda is still timid in comparison to the need. Both enjoy substantial support from the financial industry and have not ventured close to the big Kahuna—reregulating Wall Street, getting the destabilizing speculative global financial flows under control. Neither has suggested slapping a 30 percent tariff on China to force a negotiation about currency and trade policies.

But their populism isn't just rhetorical. And this agenda is

tied to a politically compelling argument of what's gone wrong.

The fall election will be largely framed around two very different, very populist appeals. McCain will revive the Reagan argument—government is the problem. He'll pledge to cut spending and taxes, and let you keep more of your money. The incompetence and corruption of government over the last eight years helps make his case. And McCain, the "sheriff" against earmarks, is perfectly situated to make this argument.

Against that, Clinton and Obama argue that the reason things are bad is that government has been handed over to the entrenched "corporate interests." Ironically, Hillary has been running to Obama's populist left through most of this campaign. Her appeal was strengthened by the economic record of her husband, but her populist credibility was also undermined by it, inasmuch as the Clinton presidency championed the corporate trade agenda, cut domestic spending dramatically as a percentage of gross domestic product while running up surpluses, pushed financial deregulation, and failed on health-care and labor-law reform.



Obama's genius has been to capture with his "Kumbaya" rhetoric not just the temper of the time but the reality of the economy. He calls for rising above partisan bickering and the arguments of the past to bring together Democrats, independents, and "Republicans with a clue" to make the reforms that we need. This isn't just a bet on "celestial angels," as Hillary suggested. He's arguing that the vast majority of Americans have a shared interest in taking back their government.

In the Cleveland debate, he put it this way: "It's not going to be easy to have a sensible energy policy in this country. ExxonMobil made \$11 billion last quarter. They are *not going to give up those profits easily*" (emphasis added). To take them on, we've got to "mobilize and inspire the American people so that they're paying attention to what their government is doing. ... And there's nothing romantic or silly about that. If the American people are activated, that's how change is going to happen."

The election this fall will pose the starkest ideological choice since 1980, when Ronald Reagan's victory ushered in the conservative era. Neither Obama nor Clinton is a movement progressive in the way Reagan was a movement conservative. But both have been forced by the reality of the economy and the force of opinion to move dramatically—and not just rhetorically—to a more progressive analysis and agenda. And if John McCain, the "Reagan foot soldier," is defeated this fall, then, as conservatives found in 1980, the real struggle for change will begin. **TAP**

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The Republican War on Voting

Inside the GOP's Vote-Suppression Playbook, 2001–2008

BY ART LEVINE

One week before the close of voter registration in Kentucky last fall, in an election that culminated with the victory of Democratic gubernatorial candidate Steve Beshear, Johanna Sharrard, a fresh-faced 26-year-old national organizer for the low-income advocacy group ACORN, gathered her canvassers in a run-down Louisville office and told them some good news: “We got 396 people yesterday—that’s really great!” Then she added what could have seemed a jarringly discordant note: “We know it’s getting harder to reach people with the cards in this area. It’s really important that you guys are not slipping up and turning to filling out your own applications or other fraudulent activity. Just yesterday we had to let another person go because she did not follow protocols.” Sharrard continued sternly, “What’s important is that we get 15,000 new voters. We’re not out there to get 10,000 new voters and 5,000 false applications.”

Indeed, the voter registration waged by ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) in Kentucky was also an effort to test the group’s new system for rooting out any fraud. The organization is readying itself for the challenges to voter participation that the poor and minorities—and Democrats—are sure to face in 2008.

Sharrard’s cautionary tone was a response to the Republican Party’s ongoing nationwide campaign to suppress the low-income minority vote by propagating the myth of voter fraud. Using various tactics—including media smears, bogus lawsuits, restrictive new voting laws and policies, and flimsy prosecutions—Republican operatives, election officials, and the GOP-controlled Justice Department have limited voting access and gone after voter-registration groups such as ACORN. Which should come as no surprise: In building support for initiatives raising the minimum wage and kindred ballot measures, ACORN has registered, in partnership with Project Vote, 1.6 million largely Democratic-leaning voters since 2004. Attacking ACORN has been a central element of a systematic GOP disenfranchisement agenda to undermine Democratic prospects before each Election Day.

Revelations that U.S. attorneys were fired for their failure to successfully prosecute voter fraud have revealed how fictitious the allegations of widespread fraud actually were—but the allegations haven’t gone away. They live on in all the

vote-suppressing laws and regulations that will likely affect this year’s election, in GOP rhetoric and, most recently, in the arguments presented by champions of Indiana’s restrictive voter-identification law in a case currently before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, progressives have tended to pay more attention to Election Day dirty tricks and to electronic voting machines than to a more systemic threat: the Republican campaign to suppress the votes of low-income, young, and minority voters through restrictive legislation and rulings, all based on the mythic specter of voter fraud. Those relatively transient voters, drawn to the polls this year by the Obama and Clinton campaigns, could find themselves thwarted in November and thereafter by the GOP-driven regime of voting restrictions—particularly if, as many observers believe, the Court upholds Indiana’s restrictive law before it adjourns this June.

Voter fraud is actually less likely to occur than lightning striking a person, according to data compiled by New York University’s Brennan Center for Justice. As Lorraine Minnite, a Columbia University professor, observed in the Project Vote report, *The Politics of Voter Fraud*, “The claim that voter fraud threatens the integrity of American elections is itself a fraud.” In October 2002, then-Attorney General John Ashcroft launched an intensive “Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative” that required all U.S. attorney offices to coordinate with local officials in combating voter fraud. Yet even after the Justice Department declared the war against voter fraud a “high priority,” only 24 people were convicted of illegal voting in federal elections between 2002 and 2005—and nobody was even *charged* by Justice with impersonating another voter. (The Justice Department declined to answer questions about more recent fraud prosecutions.) And despite the anti-immigrant frenzy fueling photo-ID laws, only 14 noncitizens were convicted of illegally voting in federal elections from 2002 through 2005—mostly because of their ignorance of election law.

Unfortunately, the public hasn’t heard just how nonexistent the voter fraud epidemic actually is. While progressives have successfully challenged some of the most restrictive laws in court, they’re still playing catch-up when it comes to combating the glib sound bites of voter-fraud alarmists. Republicans and the Bush Justice Department have cloaked their schemes under such noble-sounding concepts as “ballot integrity.” The

GOP's vote-suppression playbook features everything from phony lawsuits to questionable investigations to authoritative-seeming reports, all with the aim of promoting restrictive laws. These tactics were first perfected in the hotly contested swing state of Missouri.

The roots of John Ashcroft's passion on this issue go back to the chaos of Election Day 2000 in St. Louis, when hundreds, if not thousands, of mostly inner-city voters were turned away from polling places because their names were not on voting rolls. The resulting last-minute court battle kept some polling places open for 45 minutes after their scheduled closing time of 7 P.M. Ashcroft, then the Republican U.S. Senate nominee, lost his race to the dead Democratic governor, Mel Carnahan, whose name stayed on the ballot weeks after he died in a plane crash. At an election-night party, an infuriated Republican Sen. Kit Bond pounded the podium and screamed, "This is an outrage!"—and subsequently charged that Republican losses were due in part to dogs and dead people voting. As one local government official observed, "In St. Louis, 'dogs and dead people' is code for black people [voting fraudulently]."

That election night gave birth to the new right-wing voter-fraud movement, while Missouri became a proving ground for the vote-suppression campaigns that later spread to other key states. Missouri's then-Secretary of State Matt Blunt, now governor, launched a trumped-up investigation that concluded that more than 1,000 fraudulent ballots had been cast in an organized scheme. A Justice Department Civil Rights Division investigation, started before Ashcroft shifted the department's priorities, found no fraudulent ballots, however. Instead, it discovered that the St. Louis election board had improperly purged 50,000 voters from the rolls.

Nonetheless, the template for smear campaigns, groundless lawsuits, and politicized prosecutions used across the country had been set in Missouri. Key roles were played by many of the same GOP zealots who later made their mark on the national drive to fight voter fraud, among them St. Louis attorney Thor Hearne, the 2004 Bush-Cheney campaign election counsel who later launched the GOP front group, the American Center for Voting Rights (ACVR). And as early as 2002, the executive director of the Missouri Republican Party pioneered a new dirty trick: publicly "filing" with the Federal Election Commission a 26-page complaint against the state's leading registration group, known as Pro Vote, that charged it with secretly conspiring with Democrats in the Senate race—but then failing to sign the document so the agency never considered it.

The goal of such complaints and allegations was to create a barrage of negative publicity about voter-registration groups and the voter-fraud menace that could pave the way for restrictive laws. In Missouri, the Republicans' cries for a new state photo-ID law began in 2002, before the GOP blitz in most other states. The legislature passed such a bill in early 2006, before it was struck down that September by a Missouri state court as unconstitutional.

The GOP in Missouri also turned to prosecutions and lawsuits, most either overblown or groundless. In November 2005, Bradley Schlozman, then the Justice Department's acting civil-

rights chief, insisted on filing a lawsuit that accused Missouri's secretary of state, Robin Carnahan, a Democrat, of failing to purge supposedly ineligible voters under federal law. (U.S. Attorney Todd Graves was forced out in March 2006 for having balked at filing the suit.) A federal judge, who found that the Justice Department did not produce any evidence showing fraud justifying the purges, dismissed the lawsuit in April 2007. The department continues to appeal the ruling.

The fraud-obsessed Schlozman was then moved into Graves' old post without Senate confirmation, through a loophole in the Patriot Act. In an apparent effort to discredit both Democrats and ACORN, just five days before the tight Senate election in 2006 between incumbent Republican Jim Talent and Democrat Claire McCaskill, Schlozman announced, in violation of the department's own standards, the indictment of four former ACORN workers who had been fired by ACORN for filling out false voter-registration forms. The indictments were part of a broader effort to tilt the campaign against Democrats by bashing ACORN and limiting voter access. St. Louis' Republican election director, Scott Leiendecker, sent out a chilling letter shortly before the election to 5,000 mostly African Americans registered by ACORN, asking them to verify to the election board that they were eligible to vote. Leiendecker backed off after he faced the threat of a voting-rights lawsuit and received a warning letter from Secretary of State Carnahan.

WHAT BEGAN IN MISSOURI soon went nationwide. Starting in 2003, the Justice Department's civil-rights division issued a flurry of advisory letters, rulings, and lawsuits under the guise of fighting fraud that appear designed to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of voters. Federal and state courts have struck down some of the laws shaped by policies promoted by the Justice Department, such as strict database-matching laws limiting new voters in Washington state and Florida. Even so, Justice Department-backed secretive purging policies have targeted voter-registration applicants and current voters in several key states: In Ohio in 2006, 303,000 voters were purged in three major urban counties, while the Brennan Center reported that Pennsylvania's rigid database rules, later loosened, had excluded up to 30 percent of eligible registrants. Karl Rove aide Tim Griffin played a major role in state GOP voter "caging" operations (that is, challenging the eligibility of registered voters) in such states as Ohio and Florida. These schemes, Project Vote reports, challenged the right of 77,000 mostly minority voters to cast ballots between 2004 and 2006, under the pretext that *non-forwardable* letters sent by GOP activists to their addresses were returned as undelivered. Thor Hearne's now-vanished ACVR lobbied for strict voter-ID laws in nine states, according to McClatchy and other news organizations. Voter-ID laws in states such as Georgia, Arizona, and Indiana have, for now, been allowed to stand.

All these campaigns have created a kind of GOP vote-suppression playbook that aims to limit voting rights in the states and attack registration groups such as ACORN. In most states where ACORN wages ballot-initiative and voter-registration campaigns, Republican lawyers, officials, and



Hardened Criminals? ACORN workers try to register voters outside the Franklin County Courthouse in Columbus, Ohio, in September 2006.

The goal is to create a barrage of negative publicity about the voter-fraud menace that could pave the way for restrictive laws.

some prosecutors routinely file dubious lawsuits and complaints to generate bad press for the voter-registration drives. The lawsuits seldom if ever succeed, but the bad press they engender creates a climate to pass restrictive voting laws.

In New Mexico by the summer of 2004, ACORN's effort to register voters in advance of the closely fought presidential election was a stunning success: The organization registered 35,000 voters, mostly in the Albuquerque area. "Republicans were freaking out," recalls John Boyd, an attorney for the state Democratic Party. Republicans accused ACORN of "manufacturing voters," conflating error-plagued cards with fraud while trumpeting *one* registration card filled out in the name of a 13-year-old boy. The boy's card became the centerpiece of the lawsuit Rep. Joe Thompson, an Albuquerque Republican, filed in August 2004 demanding that the state government require photo ID for voters registered by ACORN and other nonprofits. The lawsuit claimed that the Republican plaintiffs' votes were "diluted" by supposedly false registrations.

Their case fell apart in court, and by September, a judge dismissed the lawsuit. But Republicans were not deterred by their

loss in civil court and pressed for a criminal investigation, a probe which U.S. Attorney for New Mexico David Iglesias started on the same day that the court ruled against the GOP. Iglesias was a true believer in the menace of voter fraud. As one of just two U.S. attorneys in the nation to form such task forces, he was invited to lecture other U.S. attorneys in 2005 as part of the annual Justice Department ballot-integrity conference.

Iglesias' efforts weren't enough for Patrick Rogers, the Republican National Lawyers Association point person in the state, who mounted a campaign to pressure Iglesias to bring criminal charges before the election, rather than form a task force. Indeed, even before Iglesias concluded in 2006 that there wasn't enough evidence to indict on voter fraud, major Republicans in the state had started asking the Bush administration for his removal. In early December 2006, Iglesias was one of seven U.S. attorneys whom the Justice Department fired.

Today, Iglesias says of voter fraud: "It's like the boogeymen parents use to scare their children. It's very frightening, and it doesn't exist. U.S. attorneys have better things to do with their time than chasing voter-fraud phantoms."

But the damage of chasing phantoms proved more substantial. In 2005, the state legislature, with the blessing of its Democratic governor, Bill Richardson, passed legislation that essentially crippled the ability of groups like ACORN to do mass voter registration. In 2006, ACORN had only 10 certified canvassers in the whole state, and registration plunged to 2,000 new applicants from 35,000 two years before, according to ACORN's top New Mexico organizer, Matt Henderson.

In Florida in 2004, ACORN's initiative to raise the state's minimum wage looked to be cruising to victory (it won with 71 percent of the vote), and brought in over 200,000 newly registered voters. That led business lobbies and the GOP to find a poster boy for fraud in a fired ACORN employee and ex-con named Mac Stuart, who spun elaborate tales of ACORN squirreling away hundreds of GOP voter applications it gathered but did not turn over to election officials. Republican attorneys filed two lawsuits featuring Stuart's claims. After the election, Stuart ultimately conceded that he made false statements about ACORN. In December 2005, federal judges dismissed both lawsuits.

But in the same month, the legislature passed one of the

most restrictive voting-registration laws in the country. The new law fined every registration worker \$5,000 for any lost application, potentially wiping out the entire budget of the state League of Women Voters if just 14 forms were lost and forcing the group to stop registering voters for the first time in over 70 years. It was not until August 2006 that a federal judge blocked enforcement of the law. However, a slightly revised version passed last year.

Responding to the GOP-generated hysteria over voter fraud, criminal investigations were launched in 2004 and 2005 in Wisconsin, Colorado, Florida, and Ohio, with ACORN often a target. But by the end of 2005, the investigations ended after finding either no evidence of wrongdoing by ACORN or any pervasive voter fraud. Nationally, only six former ACORN employees were charged with registration fraud or other election-related crimes in the 2004 election, offenses involving fewer than 20 forms. That's out of 1 million new voters registered by ACORN during that cycle.

Yet Thor Hearne, among others, took advantage of these assorted investigations and news accounts about fraud to create the fictional appearance of an epidemic, then added some fabrications of his own. Perhaps the wildest ACVR whopper—seized on by *The Wall Street Journal* as late as November 2006—was the charge that ACORN and an affiliated group were under criminal investigation for “paying crack cocaine for fraudulent registration forms.” Actually, the tale originated with the arrest of a Toledo-area man who may have received drugs while working for another volunteer for a now-defunct organization, not ACORN. Without substantiation, ACVR identified Democratic-leaning cities as hotspots for fraud. They were generally the same locations where U.S. attorneys later faced pressure over prosecutions, including Seattle, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. (The one exception to overblown investigations targeting ACORN was the indictment last year by a local Seattle prosecutor, welcomed by ACORN, of seven rogue ex-employees who had fabricated nearly 2,000 registration forms.)

The hyped reports, indictments, and hearings had their intended effect after the 2004 elections. Nearly 30 states considered bills to require photo ID or proof of citizenship to register or vote. While most of these measures haven't yet passed, those that have can be severe: An Arizona law requiring proof of citizenship to register has disenfranchised up to 60 percent of applicants in some counties.

Over the past few years, what began as local phony lawsuits and investigations escalated into a concerted drive by the Civil Rights Division to restrict voting. Since 2004, the goal of the state GOP vote-caging initiatives has become official Justice Department policy. The department has also promoted the equivalent of caging by pressuring 16 states and cities to speed up their purging of hundreds of thousands of voters through letters and lawsuits, as first reported by *Alternet*.

Alarming, the insubstantiality of the claims of pervasive voter fraud may not deter the U.S. Supreme Court from upholding Indiana's restrictive voter-ID law—which, according to a new University of Washington study, could disenfranchise the more than 20 percent of the state's African American voters who lack

the ID required by Indiana's law. Amazingly, Indiana has admitted that there hasn't been a single alleged case of in-person voter fraud in the state's history. Instead, Indiana's attorneys and legal allies, including the federal government, have submitted virtually nothing but unverified newspaper clippings and right-wing claims about fraud allegations in other states.

Indeed, the Supreme Court, in a little-noticed comment in an earlier ruling on Arizona's ID law, has already granted government the leeway to enact laws denying the vote based merely on fears of fraud, regardless of evidence. But outside of the world of voting experts, little attention has been paid to the lack of evidence in the federal court rulings leading up to the Indiana case. As Wendy Weiser of the Brennan Center observes, “The way this case has been decided so far [in lower courts] is that a state doesn't have to justify measures to suppress the vote.”

The Supreme Court is expected to issue its Indiana ruling in the next few months, and it's considered unlikely that the Court will strike down the law.

THESE DAYS, WEAKENED by the publicity over the U.S. attorneys scandal, the savvy voter-fraud propagandists are shifting their now-discredited arguments about massive voting by illegal immigrants to yet another “menace”: “double voting.” Republicans and some newspapers point to lists of the same names in different states to claim there has been large-scale double voting. Yet such sweeping double-voting claims are almost always due to administrative errors and the statistical probability that people with the same name and birth date will show up in large pools of voters.

Regardless of the facts, the drive for new voter-ID restrictions will likely be strengthened in the wake of the upcoming Supreme Court decision. There's little sign that progressives or Democrats are going to launch what the Brennan Center's Deborah Goldberg has called the “huge public education effort” needed to raise awareness about the problems with voter-ID laws. Democrats seemingly haven't yet grasped the political importance of fighting these restrictive policies, though they could prove a major impediment to minority voting (and if minorities voted at the same rate as whites, there would be 7.5 million more voters on Election Day).

But Johanna Sharrard and other ACORN leaders aren't going to be deterred by Republican obstacles and smears as they gear up for new registration drives this year that could be their most successful yet. Sharrard's campaign in Kentucky last year brought in over 14,000 new voters, a state record. And after seeing all the attacks against ACORN in Missouri and elsewhere, she realizes, “It's a good motivator; it showed us that that things we were doing are important.” It's an open question, though, whether progressives will realize that it's worth fighting to make sure that the voters ACORN is trying to reach will actually have their votes count. **TAP**

Art Levine is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly who has also written for Salon, The Atlantic, and numerous other publications. Research assistance for this article was provided by the Investigative Fund of the Nation Institute.

Culture & Books

“Europeans no longer have to fear their own states. Their states may be massively incompetent and occasionally corrupt, but they don’t murder their own citizens.”

— PAGE 42

GIANFRANCO GORGONI / COLLECTION DIA ART FOUNDATION



ART

NO ART FOR OIL

It’s sadly ironic that a work of art designed to critique the commercialization of art and nature is threatened by oil exploration in the Great Salt Lake.

BY KRISTON CAPPS

IN 1970, ARTIST ROBERT SMITHSON rejected the gleaming white gallery spaces and “canonical” minimalism of the New York art scene in search of an entirely different setting for his sculpture. After several exploratory trips, he selected a spot more than 2,000 miles from the Big Apple: Utah’s Great Salt Lake. Rozel Point, on the northeast

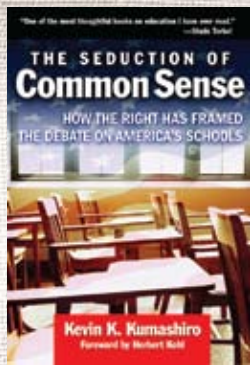
end of the lake’s Gunnison Bay, would become the home of his most important piece of sculpture: *Spiral Jetty*, a 1,500-foot-long, 15-foot-wide, 6,650-ton coil of black basalt rock and mounded earth extending counterclockwise into the pinkish water of the lake. The site was remote but not virgin territory. Oil seeped from the ground, and scat-

Downward Spiral? Robert Smithson’s famous earth art installation (shown here in 1970) is now threatened by commercial interests.

tered around the lake were the derelict instruments from prior efforts to extract that oil. “A great pleasure arose from seeing all those incoherent structures,” Smithson wrote in 1972. “This site gave evidence of a succession of man-made systems mired in abandoned hopes.”

Abandoned, but not forgotten. Today, as oil costs rise, even difficult extraction missions become potentially lucrative projects. Unconventional sources—be they shale oil in Canada or crude tar under a briny lake in Utah—previously considered too inhospitable, expensive, or politically untenable are being given a second look. In a development that has

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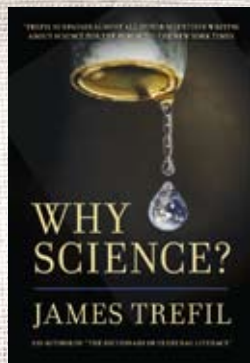
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alarmed art followers around the world, oil developers are returning to the Great Salt Lake, mere miles from *Jetty*. Even in a remote corner of Utah, the commercial world caught up with Smithson.

This is all sadly ironic, given that *Spiral Jetty* is arguably the world's foremost example of land art (also known as earth art or earthworks), a genre that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a fierce critique of the commercialization of art and nature. Defying the commodification of art objects, earth artists intervened in the landscape itself, trading brushes for excavators. At a time when gallery and museum spaces were facing unprecedented scrutiny as structures that shaped the way viewers understood art as well as the course of art's development, earth artists like Smithson transformed natural spaces into the work itself. Land art married site-specific installation, minimalist aesthetics, and institutional critique with a nascent environmentalist movement.

Smithson's name appears in nearly every textbook written about art published between World War II and the present day. At one time better known for his criticism than his work, he developed a theoretical distinction for art, catego-

and writings as well as photographs and ephemera related to his land works was mounted in 2004 by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and traveled in 2005 to the Dallas Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art. For the New York stage of the tour, the Whitney (with the support of Minetta Brook, a nonprofit arts organization) realized *Floating Island*, a project Smithson designed but never executed, in which a small island of rocks, trees, and pathways was built on a barge and pulled by a tugboat around Manhattan.

HOLT, SMITHSON'S WIDOW, FIRST got word that *Spiral Jetty* was in danger from Lynn DeFreitas, executive director of Friends of the Great Salt Lake, an organization primarily charged with safeguarding the lake's watershed. On Jan. 7, 2008, Pearl Exploration and Production Ltd., a Canadian oil and gas company, applied for permission to establish two exploratory wells on its land leases in Gunnison Bay, some five miles southwest from Rozel Point's shore. Though an agreement reached between the state and various environmental groups revoked many of the mineral leases covering the north arm of the lake,

Smithson may have seen it as poetic justice for the commercial devastation of the environment to be followed by the commercial devastation of art.

rizing objects as "site" and "non-site." A non-site work can be displayed in any space (say, an art gallery), whereas a site work exists in a dialectical relationship with its settings. Since most of his significant work was of the site variety, his finished projects are relatively few for an artist of his stature. However, his accomplishments were extraordinary given that he was only 35 when he was killed in a 1973 plane crash while surveying a site for *Amarillo Ramp*, a rock semicircle that emerged from an artificial lake in Texas. The piece was completed by artists Nancy Holt (who was also Smithson's wife), Richard Serra, and others. A retrospective of the artist's paintings, sculptures,

Pearl Exploration's three 2003 leases fell within 55,000 exempted acres. "This is an area of the lake where the state has targeted in a robust way oil and mineral leases," DeFreitas says. "It's under a veritable siege of mismanagement."

Holt sounded the alarm with a letter to art-world insiders in January, which was picked up by bloggers who noted ways that *Jetty* fans could register their concern. The Utah governor's office accepts comments from the public before granting drilling permits on the lake, but there was only a narrow window for submitting comments on Pearl Exploration's application. Originally, the permit was set to be fast-tracked, with public

input closing on Jan. 30, less than one month after the application's submission. Thanks in part to the quick work of e-mail chains and the blogosphere, the governor's office extended the deadline for public comment to Feb. 13.

By the deadline, the governor's office had fielded more than 300 phone calls and 65 letters responding to Pearl Exploration's application, according to Jonathan Jemming, director of the Utah Resource Development Coordinating Committee. In addition, Jemming says, the office received around 3,000 e-mails registering protest. Many of those complaints were sent by organizations representing much larger memberships, adding to the total count of protesters. "I've never seen anything like it. It's been impressive," Jemming says. Though some of the complaints were more generic in nature—oil wells are never welcomed with open arms, even in remote areas like Rozel Point—Jemming characterized the overwhelming majority of correspondence his office received as primarily "comments related to the *Spiral Jetty* from the arts community."

Pearl Exploration's application attracted the ire of the Dia Art Foundation, which has owned *Spiral Jetty* since 1999, when it was acquired as a gift from the Smithson estate. (Dia owns the rocks themselves and leases the 10 acres of land under the sculpture from the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands.) "We're decidedly opposed to the proposed drilling," says Dia's deputy director, Laura Raicovich. She emphasizes that Utah's decision on the application should reflect global interest in the work's preservation. As for the fact that Smithson built *Jetty* in the shadow of oil-production debris, Raicovich says that modern-day oil activity is a different matter altogether. "Whatever Smithson encountered when he went to the site became part of what inspired the work," she acknowledges. "However, I don't see how endangering the environment that now surrounds the work—timeless, empty, that's very much a part of what he responded to in the first place—is going to have anything other than a negative impact on the sculpture."



Entropy's Effect: After spending nearly three decades underwater, *Spiral Jetty* is now encrusted with salt.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has also issued two statements in protest of the drilling application. In one pointed letter, the trust's senior program officer, Amy Cole, charged that the state had not done due diligence to investigate the impact of the application. The plans "do not evaluate whether there would be a visual or auditory impact on the setting of the *Jetty* and whether the drilling infrastructure, including the barges, would be seen or heard several miles off-shore," she wrote.

THERE'S MORE AT STAKE THAN JUST one exploratory drilling permit. What happens if Pearl Exploration is more successful than Amoco, which abandoned the site in the 1970s? If the governor's office approves the plans without including a provision for shutting off the valve in the future, more staging operations—potentially permanent ones—could be established near Rozel Point. To situate an oil-industry outpost around *Spiral Jetty* would be to dramatically change its context. "The work was concerned with the origin of life as well as the devastating forces of entropy and the irreversibility of the loss of energy," wrote Peter Selz, a Berkeley art historian focusing on art as a political phenomenon, in a 1996 essay. "Its loca-

tion near a disused oil-drilling operation reflected Smithson's great interest in the rehabilitation of land damaged by industry."

Although there have been efforts since pioneer days to extract the oil from this region, they have all failed, says Jim Springer, spokesman for the Department of Natural Resources Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining. He notes that the oil has a high sulfur content and is best used as road base. In theory the oil can be refined into a gasoline-like product, but refineries near the Great Salt Lake aren't set up for that kind of operation. Asked whether a successful well off Rozel Point could lead to refineries being built nearby, Springer says, "It possibly might." Preservation activists are optimistic, though. "We wouldn't end up with oil rigs on Great Salt Lake—it's just not going to happen," DeFreitas says.

Though an uninterrupted viewing experience of the art—"viewshed" is the word used by the state of Utah—dominates the list of reasons for protest, preservationists also voice environmental concerns. Pearl Exploration's application gives short shrift to the bay's population of brine shrimp and ignores the natural pelican hatchery on a nearby island. The lake, which is also a stopping point for migratory birds, is a "hemi-

spherically important ecosystem,” in the words of DeFreitas. But public outcry so far has swirled around *Spiral Jetty* and any loss—material or contextual—that drilling may augur for that site. Environmental activists aren’t bitter that it’s *Jetty*, not brine shrimp, that is mobilizing protest. “Gunnison Bay is unique in its salinity and its ecology. That’s part of the reason why Smithsonian chose the place he did,” DeFreitas says.

In the end, the decision about whether to preserve the *Spiral Jetty* experience rests solely with the governor’s office. The Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining says that the Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan, a document drafted in 2000 that outlines the state’s responsibilities with regard to the lake, makes only passing reference to *Spiral Jetty* and Rozel Point. But individuals within the division recognize the value of the artwork; indeed, every person in the state seems to have firsthand familiarity with *Jetty*, if not outright affection for it. “I’ve been out there, it’s a fun site,” Springer says. “No one wants to see anything happen to it.”

SMITHSON’S ART WAS DESIGNED TO embrace its hostile environment. He famously admired the potential effects entropy might have on his earthworks, a position that offers rather vague guidance as to preserving the works. He built *Jetty* when the lake’s waters were below standard elevation (4,200 feet above sea level); then lake waters rose, and the piece spent most of the next three decades entirely submerged. When drought caused the work to resurface in 1999, the black basalt rocks, already pinked by millions of colonizing lake-water micro-organisms, were completely crusted over with a thin layer of white salt. Dia has considered cleaning the piece, but most *Jetty* supporters have adopted its new saline skin as an indication of the ongoing exchange between earth art and Earth.

But Smithsonian’s writings, even when he was at his most mercurial, don’t suggest that he would have appreciated the return of industry to the lake under a general embrace of entropy. *Spiral Jetty*

is arguably the world’s most important piece of earth art and, without question, Utah’s most important artwork. It won’t remain the same if its context changes. The sculpture was always meant to be a foil to the Great Salt Lake: pitting art against nature, in a sense, and tracking the latter’s effects on the former. Smithsonian may have seen it as poetic justice for

the commercial devastation of the environment to be followed by the commercial devastation of art, but it is too high a price to pay for fleeting crude oil reserves. **TAP**

Kriston Capps, an art critic living in Washington, D.C., is a contributing writer for the Washington City Paper. He blogs at grammarpolice.net.

BOOKS

THE MANUFACTURE OF UNCERTAINTY

DOUBT IS THEIR PRODUCT: HOW INDUSTRY’S ASSAULT ON SCIENCE THREATENS YOUR HEALTH BY DAVID MICHAELS

Oxford University Press, 359 pages, \$27.95

BY CHRIS MOONEY

THE SABOTAGE OF SCIENCE IS NOW a routine part of American politics. The same corporate strategy of bombarding the courts and regulatory agencies with a barrage of dubious scientific information has been tried on innumerable occasions—and it has nearly always worked, at least for a time. Tobacco. Asbestos. Lead. Vinyl chloride. Chromium. Formaldehyde. Arsenic. Atrazine. Benzene. Beryllium. Mercury. Vioxx. And on and on. In battles over regulating these and many other dangerous substances, money has bought science, and then science—or, more precisely, artificially exaggerated uncertainty about scientific findings—has greatly delayed action to protect public and worker safety. And in many cases, people have died.

Tobacco companies perfected the ruse, which was later copycatted by other polluting or health-endangering industries. One tobacco executive was even dumb enough to write it down in 1969. “Doubt is our product,” reads the infamous memo, “since it is the best means of competing with the ‘body of fact’ that exists in the minds of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy.”

In his important new book, David Michaels calls the strategy “manufacturing uncertainty.” A former Clinton administration Energy Department official and now associate chair of the

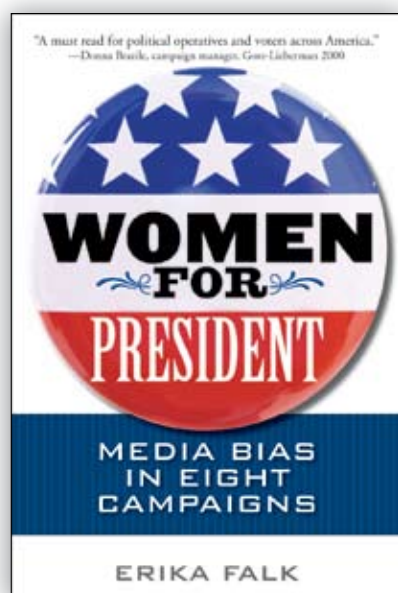
Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at George Washington University, Michaels is a comprehensive and thorough chronicler—indeed, almost too thorough a chronicler, at times overwhelming the reader with information.

But there’s a lot to be learned here. Even most of us who have gone swimming in the litigation-generated stew of tobacco documents (you can never get the stink off of you again) don’t have a clue about the extent of the abuses. For the war on science described in *Doubt is Their Product* is so sweeping and fundamental as to make you question why we ever had the Enlightenment. There aren’t just a few scientists for hire—there are law firms, public-relations firms, think tanks, and entire product-defense companies that specialize in rejiggering epidemiological studies to make findings of endangerment to human health disappear.

For Michaels, these companies are the scientific equivalent of Arthur Andersen. He calls their work “mercenary” science, drawing an implicit analogy with private military firms like Blackwater. If the companies can get the raw data, so much the better, and if they can’t, they’ll find another way to make findings of statistically significant risk go away. Just throw out the animal studies or tinker with the subject groups. Perform a new meta-analysis. Conduct a selective literature review. Think up some poten-

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¹Robin Givhan, *Washington Post*, 07/20/07
²Adam Tschorn, *Los Angeles Times*, 01/20/08

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tially confounding variable. And so forth.

They can always get it published somewhere. And if they can't, they can just start their own peer-reviewed journal, one likely to have an exceedingly low scientific impact but a potentially profound effect on the regulatory process.

All of science is subject to such exploitation because all of science is fundamentally characterized by uncertainty. No study is perfect; each one is subject to criticism both illegitimate and legitimate—and so if you wish, you can make any scientific stance, even the most strongly established, appear weak and dubious. All you have to do is selectively highlight uncertainty, selectively attack the existing studies one by one, and ignore the weight of the evidence. Although Michaels focuses largely on the attempts to whitewash the risks that various chemicals pose to the workplace and public health, the same methods are also used to attack the scientific understanding of evolution and global warming.

And it happens virtually every time the government even dreams of regulating a substance. People know what's going on, but they respond as if they're simply shocked, shocked, to find science being tortured. And so the outgunned federal

tory system and the courts have worsened the situation by making corporate sabotage of scientific research easier than ever.

The 1998 Data Access Act (or “Shelby Amendment”) and the 2001 Data Quality Act, both originally a glint in Big Tobacco's eye, enable companies to get the data behind publicly funded studies and help them challenge research that might serve as the basis for regulatory action. Meanwhile, the 1993 Supreme Court decision in the little-known *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals* case further facilitates the strategy, unwisely empowering trial court judges to determine what is and what isn't good science in civil cases. Under *Daubert*, judges have repeatedly spiked legitimate expert witnesses who were otherwise set to testify about the dangers demonstrated by epidemiological research. Often juries don't even hear the science any more because the defense can get it thrown out pre-trial.

It's all about questioning the science to gum up the works. The companies pose as if they are defending open debate and inquiry and are trying to make scientific data available to everyone. In reality, once they get the raw data, they spend the vast resources at their disposal to discredit independent research.

It happens virtually every time. People know what's going on, but they respond as if they're simply shocked, shocked, to find science being tortured.

agencies that must consult science to take action—the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and Food and Drug Administration, among others—repeatedly capitulate to corporations that effectively purchase science on demand.

We used to have a regulatory system—that was the dream, anyway, of the 1960s and 1970s. But in significant part due to the manufacturing-uncertainty strategy, we now have the bureaucratic equivalent of clotted arteries. And mercenary science hasn't just blinded federal agencies. It has also blinded the courts, where the same tactics apply. Indeed, recent changes to the role of science in the federal regula-

Michaels ends by proposing a series of reforms. He suggests giving citizens more access to the courts (since the regulatory agencies are broken), requiring full disclosure of all conflicts of interest in science submitted to the regulatory process (and discounting conflicted studies), getting rid of rigged reanalysis by promulgating scientific standards that forbid it, and returning to the practice of using the best available evidence to protect public health, rather than waiting for a degree of unassailable certainty that will never arrive.

With his extensive chronicling of just how many times the manufacturing-uncertainty strategy has been used

to make our world more dangerous, Michaels has performed a great service. Moreover, because he's a scientist himself and has seen these abuses up close in government, he can go much further than muckraking journalists who have often sought to expose this kind of malfeasance. (Full disclosure: Michaels cites my own book *The Republican War on Science* and mentions me in his acknowledgments.) I support Michaels' regulatory solutions—his "Sarbanes-Oxley for Science" proposal, as he calls it—and would like to see them enacted into law or put into effect by administrative action. But if there's a problem with *Doubt is Their Product*, it's that Michaels is, in a way, too much of a scientist. Let me explain.

Michaels chronicles a long litany of outrageous abuses, nothing less than the undermining of reason itself from within. Yet despite just how vulnerable the book shows science to be, Michaels continues to have faith that the solution lies in science. No matter how many times we have seen the facts lose, he still writes as if he thinks the facts alone will win.

So Michaels slices and dices all the misinformation, as he's ideally equipped to do. Anyone who grasps the nature of science well enough to follow him will not only be convinced but also deeply angered by what's happening. But other readers will just feel dizzied by the complex analyses, confused and ready prey for the science sharks whom Michaels has worked so hard to expose. The manufacturing-uncertainty strategy works because it buries you in the facts, loses you in the woods of science. Sometimes, arguing back within that arena only makes it worse.

And so, while eminently rational critiques of the abuse of science have their place—and Michaels' is excellent—I worry that the defenders of science sometimes delude themselves into thinking rational criticism is enough. It isn't, however, because scientifically grounded argument will only persuade those inclined to defend science in the first place. In order to be protected from the kind of assault it now faces, science must do more than convince its own.



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Science needs the allied power of outrage, political will, and a fundamental commitment to fighting back that, as of now, simply doesn't exist. So enough of being shocked, shocked. It's time for the merry, rampaging science-abusers themselves to be shocked as the sleep-

ing giant of American science awakens and finally decides it isn't going to take it anymore. **TAP**

Chris Mooney is a senior correspondent for The American Prospect and author of The Republican War on Science.

BOOKS

THE SIMPLIFICATION DODGE

100 MILLION UNNECESSARY RETURNS: A SIMPLE, FAIR, AND COMPETITIVE TAX PLAN FOR THE UNITED STATES BY MICHAEL J. GRAETZ

Yale University Press, 261 pages, \$30.00

FREE LUNCH: HOW THE WEALTHIEST AMERICANS ENRICH THEMSELVES AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE (AND STICK YOU WITH THE BILL)

BY DAVID CAY JOHNSTON, Portfolio, 323 pages, \$24.95

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

THERE ARE TWO BROAD VIEWS OF what we mean by tax reform. One school decries the complexity—a byzantine tax code, impenetrable forms, public and private tax bureaucrats, and self-defeating or inefficient incentives that add up to sheer economic waste. The other school objects to who pays, reminding us that the rich have used their political influence to kill the system's progressivity, leaving ordinary taxpayers with too much of the bill. Both schools can agree that the system ought to be streamlined and that the complexity is often the consequence of special-interest provisions that harm economic efficiency as well as efficient tax collection.

In practice, however, the tax-simplification theme is often a political stalking horse for an even less equitable (though perhaps simpler) tax system. Proposals such as the Forbes flat tax, or the postcard-size tax return, or Gov. Mike Huckabee's proposal to abolish the IRS in favor of (what would be astronomical and regressive) national sales taxes invariably tout how simple they would be, but their deeper purpose is to reduce the share of taxes that the rich pay.

Michael Graetz's book, *100 Million Unnecessary Returns*, is an intellectually serious and moderately conservative version of this first genre. At the heart of his

plan is a 10 percent to 14 percent value-added tax (VAT) that would underwrite a general exemption of \$50,000 for an individual and \$100,000 for a couple or family. As a consequence, the 100 million households of his title would no longer file income-tax returns. His book is mostly about the purported benefits of the plan to simplification and to competitiveness, not the worsening regressivity.

By contrast, David Cay Johnston's *Free Lunch* is a shining example of the second school. In an era of over-caffeinated armchair pundits, Johnston is the rare old-fashioned reporter—he covers taxes for *The New York Times*—with a capacity for both investigative legwork and indignation on behalf of regular people. His previous book, *Perfectly Legal*, explores the Internal Revenue Service's losing war with ever more convoluted tax schemes, virtually all for the benefit of the wealthy. These schemes have shifted taxes onto moderate-income people while conveniently adding to the popular backlash against the IRS. Johnston shows why low-income people using the earned income tax credit are far more likely to be audited than rich people using baroque tax shelters. With audit resources restricted by a conservative Congress, the IRS can fathom the former but not the latter.

In *Free Lunch*, Johnston offers an

appalling sampler of the other strategies used by the affluent to win tax breaks and other hidden subsidies at the expense of both the Treasury and the broad public interest. In one chapter, he explains how the tax code rewards America's large corporations for moving production abroad. As if it were not enough that the Chinese government offers huge subsidies and repressed workers,

A company with operations in the United States and another country can borrow money at home, deducting the interest and thus lowering American taxes. At the same time, it can earn interest on the untaxed cash it keeps overseas. So when an American company closes a factory here and moves it to China, provided it meets some technical rules, it can deduct the interest charges on its United States tax return while building up profits overseas that may never be taxed.

The tax treatment of U.S. foreign corporate profits is complex—but who cares? Though the complexity serves incidentally as a full-employment act for a costly private bureaucracy of tax attorneys and accountants, the real function is reducing corporate taxes (and also subsidizing outsourcing). That's why corporations lobby for tax simplification about as often as cops get parking tickets. In a nice grace note, Johnston recalls the system's lineage. The treatment of foreign taxes was originally worked out by Herbert Hoover's Treasury secretary, Andrew Mellon, to reduce the big oil companies' American taxes while offering the Saudis stable royalties. As Johnston comments, "Adam Smith would not have approved."

In his well-researched and narrated stories covering more than a dozen facets of the subsidy-for-the-rich game, Johnston makes clear that the "complexity" of our tax system is not the result of tax bureaucrats, or wonky legislators, or big-spending liberals. Rather, it reflects elaborate schemes invented by wealthy people seeking to evade taxes or find other ways to underwrite private riches at public taxpayer expense. Johnston

reminds us that complexity per se is a second-order problem. The primary problem is who pays and who benefits.

Graetz, a Yale law professor and former assistant secretary of the Treasury, downplays this key issue in *100 Million Unnecessary Returns*. I admired his previous book, *Death by a Thousand Cuts*, co-authored with his Yale colleague Ian Shapiro. From this earlier volume, a superb case study of how the right had successfully demonized progressive taxation, I had mistakenly pegged Graetz as a process reformer and moderate liberal. I was curious to learn what kind of liberal case he might make for a VAT.

But *100 Million Unnecessary Returns*, though ingenious, relies heavily on familiar conservative premises and rhetorical ploys. He begins by expressing alarm at the projected deficit. If the Bush tax cuts are allowed to expire in 2010, he writes, “federal revenues will exceed 20

Having begun with a misleading jeremiad against deficits, Graetz then offers a thoughtful discussion of the excessive use of tax deductions as instruments of public policy. But unlike Johnston (or parts of his own previous book with Ian Shapiro), Graetz once again does not cite the paramount source of the estimated \$700 billion in revenues lost to tax expenditures—the outsized political influence of financial elites.

Graetz also proposes to cut the already reduced corporate income tax rate even further, to the range of 15 percent to 20 percent, purportedly as a boost to competitiveness. As justification, he cites other advanced economies’ lower corporate rates—the unfortunate result of tax competition and the influence of Graetz’s counterparts overseas. He also offers standard conservative alarms on Social Security and Medicare, which he says will have to be “trimmed,” and he likes

the regressivity of Europe’s value-added taxes because the services they pay for are highly redistributive. By analogy, it might make great sense to have, say, a 10 percent to 14 percent value-added tax if it paid for national health insurance. Graetz’s value-added tax, however, would neither add net revenues nor finance additional public services. It would replace a more progressive income tax with a far less progressive tax on consumption.

To make his VAT less regressive, Graetz would offer credits for people making under \$30,000 a year (and require them to file a new tax form to receive the credits!). But the working middle class earning \$30,000 to \$100,000 would likely be socked with higher net taxes. And despite his erudition, Graetz doesn’t bother to compute just how much more regressive the resulting system would be.

Would his proposal simplify the tax system, the premise for his entire scheme? Most tax complexity is the problem—and the opportunity—of those in the upper brackets. They are the taxpayers who make extensive use of shelters—and under Graetz’s plan they would still file income tax returns. For the rest of us, filing a tax return is just not that big a deal. The vast majority of people with earnings under \$100,000 use the standard deduction. Even for those moderate-income people who itemize, it’s a matter of keeping decent financial records and perhaps paying a few hundred dollars to a tax-preparer. As Graetz admits, getting rid of the tax expenditures that cause the worst complexity (and regressivity) is a political problem. If Congress can muster the political will to render the income tax simpler and fairer with the addition of a VAT, it can do so without one.

The next president will need to make the tax system simpler and fairer for three big reasons: to restore fiscal balance, to raise adequate funds for public needs, and to restore trust in the tax system itself. The best way to achieve those goals is not to add a VAT but to restore progressive rates and repeal tax preferences that cause most of the system’s complexity, regressivity, and failure to collect adequate revenues. **TAP**

Most tax complexity is the problem—and the opportunity—of people in the upper brackets. They are the ones who make extensive use of shelters.

percent of GDP, a level reached only once since World War II.” But maybe we need federal revenues to exceed 20 percent of gross domestic product. Restoring a progressive income tax system to finance an adequate level of public outlay after decades of public neglect is an option not on Graetz’s radar.

Worse, though the current deficit is clearly the result of deliberate policy choices by George W. Bush to reduce taxes on the rich and finance his war through borrowing, Graetz blames the deficit on generic irresponsibility of unnamed “politicians.” Because future generations do not vote, Graetz contends, “deficit finance is catnip to politicians.” But oddly, neither Bill Clinton nor the Democratic congressional majorities of the mid-1990s were susceptible to that catnip when they took political risks to balance the budget. The most elementary intellectual honesty by a Yale law professor would lay the blame for the deficit where it belongs.

individual savings accounts as a substitute for part of Social Security.

Graetz makes four arguments for his value-added tax scheme. First, the federal tax code is too complex; second, government inefficiently pursues many social and economic objectives via tax subsidies instead of directly; third, our failure to have a VAT leaves U.S. industry at a competitive disadvantage; and finally, a VAT would increase savings rates. This is all true as far as it goes. He is also usefully and somewhat scornfully critical of the two competing conservative proposals, a national sales tax and a flat tax. However, his own preferred remedy, which he terms a “Competitive TAX,” leaves much to be desired.

Graetz thinks he sees the elements of a grand bargain in a VAT. He quotes a marvelous line from Larry Summers that a VAT will be enacted as soon as Democrats recognize its potential as a money machine and Republicans realize it is regressive. Indeed, one can defend



BOOKS

FROM FANTASY TO FLASCO

DAYDREAM BELIEVERS: HOW A FEW GRAND IDEAS WRECKED AMERICAN POWER BY FRED KAPLAN, John Wiley & Sons, 246 pages, \$25.95

BY MICHAEL LIND

DARTH VADER MAKES A BETTER villain than Mr. Magoo. A sinister mastermind is not only more dramatic than a myopic bumbler but more reassuring, because a universe controlled by a malevolent intelligence is at least controlled by intelligence. For this reason, explanations of the Bush administration's disastrous foreign policy in Iraq and the world in terms of Halliburton profits and alleged connections between the House of Bush and the House of Saud satisfy many who recoil from the depressing thought that a great nation could be led into disaster by people who are well intentioned and sincerely deluded.

The latter proposition is the thesis of *Daydream Believers*, by Fred Kaplan, the "War Stories" columnist of *Slate* magazine. Supplementing well-known facts with fresh reporting, Kaplan makes the case, no less true for being familiar, that two broad streams of thought converged in the Bush administration. One intellectual tributary influenced "conservative nationalists" like Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney; the other is identified with neoconservatives like Paul Wolfowitz and Elliot Abrams.

From the 1970s onward, the conservative nationalists were drawn to the vision of unchallenged American superiority in high-tech warfare, a longtime theme of

Toxic Interaction: Rumsfeld, Bush, Cheney, and Gen. Peter Pace display their patriotism, Dec. 2006

Albert Wohlstetter of the RAND Corporation and his younger colleague Andrew Marshall of the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment. In his 80s now, Marshall is known as the "Yoda" of the "revolution in military affairs." Kaplan writes: "On January 24, 1991, eight days after the air war [portion of the Gulf War] started, Andy Marshall called a staff meeting. He was wondering whether the 'revolution in military affairs' had begun, whether the opening air strikes of the Gulf War ... marked a fundamental change in the nature of warfare."

Kaplan also observes: "Nearly twenty years earlier, Marshall and Wohlstetter had thought that these new weapons would restore parity to the Soviet-American military balance in Europe. Now that the Soviet Union was gone, it seemed that they might secure American military pre-eminence worldwide." A decade later, in January 2002, then-Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld declared that the role of air-

power in swiftly routing the Taliban in Afghanistan proved that the revolution in military affairs was complete. One more test remained for the idea that the U.S. could win wars with quick, surgical, high-tech airpower on the cheap: Iraq.

The neoconservatives, for their part, held “two planks”: rejecting multilateral diplomacy as a restraint on American power and using that power to reshape the world. “In their first few months in power, Bush and his top aides—Rumsfeld, Cheney, and [Condoleezza] Rice—made good on their derision of multilateralism, which they viewed as a vestige of Clinton’s liberal sentimentality, and, more than that, an unnecessary burden in an age of indomitable American power,” Kaplan writes. “The open intention to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty, the explicit scuttling of talks on missiles and nuclear weapons with North Korea, the brusque discarding of the Kyoto environmental accord—all signaled that a new, hard-nosed team was running the White House and, by exten-

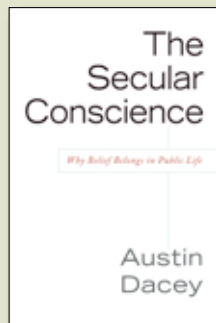
sion, the world.” And with September 11 came an opportunity for the neocons to push the second plank by reshaping the Middle East.

The exemplary abuse that the establishment press heaped on Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer for their book, *The Israel Lobby*, was clearly intended to deter other scholars from suggesting that Israel and some of its American supporters had anything to do with the Iraq War or Bush administration foreign policy. While avoiding exaggeration, Kaplan documents the influence on the Bush administration of the Israeli right and its neoconservative allies, such as pardoned Irangate criminal Elliot Abrams, whom Kaplan quotes as saying: “Tomorrow’s lobby for Israel has got to be conservative Christians ... because there aren’t going to be enough Jews to do it.” Appointed by Bush to be the National Security Council’s director for Near Eastern, South Asian, and North African affairs and the point man for the “Greater Middle East Initiative,” Abrams supervised a

report cataloguing all the failings of the Arab world that “seemed to confirm the Arab world’s deepest paranoia. ... Speaking privately with his aides, Powell said the White House was, in effect, telling Arabs, ‘Get down out of those trees and be democrats.’” Kaplan emphasizes the influence on the Bush administration of Natan Sharansky, the Soviet Jewish dissident turned Israeli hardliner. As Kaplan points out, “In Israel, Sharansky was widely viewed as an obstructionist to peace talks” by proposing unrealistic demands for democratic purity among the Palestinians as a precondition for Israeli concessions.

In his catalog of Bush administration failures, Kaplan includes the disastrous 2006 Israeli war in Lebanon. Kaplan reports that the Bush administration refused to heed calls for shuttle diplomacy by Secretary of State Rice to broker a truce, because “they wanted to wait a while, to give Israel a chance to demolish Hezbollah.” The radicalism of the administration was apparent, when Rice made

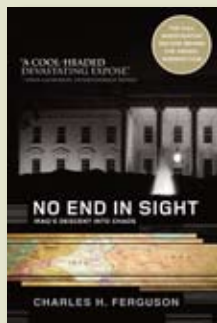
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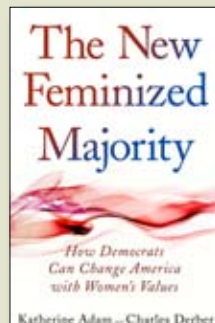


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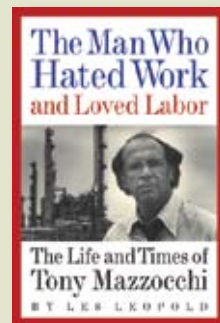
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“the remark that dropped jaws and made headlines. ‘What we’re seeing here,’ she said, ‘is, in a sense, the growing—the birth pangs of a new Middle East.’” Kaplan writes that Bush and Rice “believed that reversing [historic American] priorities—pursuing democracy at the expense of

of the virtual certainty that Sen. John McCain will be the Republican presidential candidate. One of the most fervent supporters of the Iraq War, McCain has made his support for the Bush administration’s “surge” strategy central to his campaign. His idea of a joke is publicly singing

cons prefer to the liberal internationalist Franklin Roosevelt.

While McCain vows to plunge onward to an illusory victory in Iraq, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, despite their differences, have made it clear that, if elected, they would wind down the Iraq War in order to focus on al-Qaeda. The prospect that discredited neoconservatives might regain the ability to shape U.S. foreign policy under President McCain means that the stakes in the 2008 election could not be higher. Kaplan writes: “The great divide in thinking about American foreign policy today is not so much between Realists and Neoconservatives; it’s between realists (with a small r) and fantasists. ... In these opening years of the twenty-first century, the United States has been led by fantasists.” If McCain wins, the fantasists may get a third term. **TAP**

Michael Lind, the Whitehead Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, is the author of *The American Way of Strategy*.

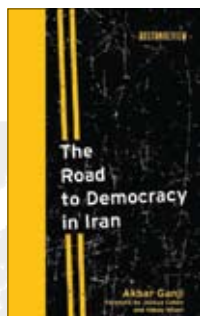
The prospect of neoconservatives regaining sway over U.S. foreign policy under President McCain means that the stakes in 2008 could not be higher.

stability—would yield both; but there was nothing beyond faith to support this belief.” The administration’s willingness to work with despots like Pakistan’s Musharraf and Saudi Arabia’s rulers, while refusing even to talk to Iran and Syria, only made the United States look hypocritical as well as ineffectual.

Kaplan’s depressing account of the wreck of American foreign policy by the toxic interaction of dogmatism, ignorance, and zeal is all the more sobering in light

what he referred to as “the old Beach Boys song, Bomb Iran,” to the tune of “Barbara Ann,” and, more seriously, he has said that he can envision U.S. military bases in Iraq for the next 100 years. During the primary campaign of 2000, many neo-conservative “McCainiacs” preferred the Arizona senator to the eventual nominee, George W. Bush, and recently *The Weekly Standard* published the inevitable article comparing McCain to Winston Churchill, an unapologetic imperialist whom neo-

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FAREWELL TO ARMS

WHERE HAVE ALL THE SOLDIERS GONE? THE TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN EUROPE BY JAMES J. SHEEHAN, Houghton Mifflin, 284 pages, \$26.00

BY JAY WINTER

TRY DRIVING FROM PARIS TO BERLIN and you will understand that in Europe today the only frightening extremes are the speeds at which motorists drive on the Autobahn. It is a remarkable change for a continent that not so long ago was consumed by the passions of war and wracked by cruelty and suffering. In place of that strife are the mundane and less terrifying tasks of securing the well-being of nations that are self-conscious of their varying histories and eccentricities, but whose borders resemble those of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

This transformation is the subject of James J. Sheehan's *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone?*, one of those rare books that rearranges the terms of discussion of 20th-century European history. A distinguished historian, recently retired from teaching at Stanford, Sheehan goes one step beyond Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes*—the best and most stimulating synthesis to date—by showing that 1945, rather than 1968 or 1989, was the real point of no return throughout the continent. Before 1945, states were sovereign entities that waged war. After that date and over time, states voluntarily parted with some of their sovereignty in joining a new Europe whose business was welfare, not warfare.

Sheehan's focus is this passage of Europe from "garrison" to "civilian" states, the achievement that may now allow Europe to put its history in its past. The change came about through two massive political transformations after 1945. The first was the peaceful transition from right-wing dictatorships to democracies first in Germany and Italy, and then in Spain, Portugal, and Greece, whose political stability is due in large part to their participation in the European Union. The second was

the relatively peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire in Eastern Europe. Sheehan rightly emphasizes contingency in these two processes. Without farsighted leaders like King Juan-Carlos in Madrid or Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow, these changes might have been blocked or accompanied by significant bloodshed. But they were not, probably because men and women all over Europe had had a surfeit of violence and knew from their own and their families' experiences what that violence had meant. "Never again" was a phrase less associated with the Holocaust after 1945 than with total war against civilians and soldiers alike.

Here is the source of what Sheehan acknowledges to be a fundamental divide between European and American visions of the state. Europeans do not want a superstate that submerges the peculiarities of their cheese and sausages; even less do they want a Europe

Europeans do not want a superstate that submerges the peculiarities of their cheese and sausages; even less do they want a Europe armed to the teeth.

that is armed to the teeth. Americans are more divided on both points—the bland homogenization of tastes and products, and the need to pay or to force our grandchildren to pay for today's perpetual war, the war on terrorism.

A civilian state, Sheehan shows, is one incapable of fighting a war without end. Let someone else fight that fight, most Europeans say. And when isolated European leaders join the fight led by the White House, the domestic political price they pay is very high. It is at least arguable that all the domestic achievements of Tony Blair over 10 years as

British prime minister were thrown away when he stood shoulder to shoulder with George W. Bush. Not only did he undermine the massive majority his Labour Party had forged after the dark years of Thatcherism, but his willingness to believe the lies the American regime told about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in 2003 undermined to the vanishing point his credibility with the electorate. So did the foolish stance taken a year later by Spanish Prime Minister José Maria Aznar that the bombing of a commuter train near Madrid was the work of Basque terrorists (Islamists proved to be responsible). Aznar made this statement on the eve of elections, and thereby through his transparent lies, ensured his own defeat. In rejecting Blair and Aznar, the people of Britain and Spain were making clear their opposition to an American-style presidential executive, someone all too ready to send in the marines and to lie about the reasons.

Leaders of civilian states lie, too. Witness the case of French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, the poet of morality who went to the U.N. Security Council to condemn America. Not long thereafter he was involved in blackening the name of his chief rival for the French presidency, Nicolas Sarkozy, by

apparently getting one of his own aides to tap into banking records and to invent and record a nonexistent account for his rival's supposed kickbacks from securing defense contracts. It was de Villepin and not Sarkozy who got caught and is paying the price. There is no point in claiming any greater moral vision among Europe's leaders than among America's.

Instead, Sheehan points to the role played by millions of ordinary Europeans who voted with their feet and their pocketbooks against the garrison state. In 2003, there were massive demonstra-

tions against the war in Iraq, a moment captured brilliantly by Ian McEwan in his novel *Saturday* (2005). Tony Blair ignored the protests, only to be forced into a somewhat manic retirement, pretending to know how to bring peace to the Middle East. His failure was inevitable because he tried to use the resources of a civilian state—and Britain is emphatically such a state, especially now that the conflict in Northern Ireland appears to be defused—not for civilian purposes but on behalf of his American partner in regime change in the Middle East. This decision effectively destroyed not only his political career and legacy but probably his party's chances of remaining in power. Siding with the Americans over Iraq also had economic consequences. With British state schools still massively overcrowded and public transport both undercapitalized and too expensive, should we be surprised that British voters find the Iraq adventure both irrelevant to their concerns and slightly insane?

Sheehan rightly emphasizes the transformation of living standards in Western Europe since 1945 in the process of Europeanization and “civilianization.” Europeans can afford the social state. There are still gross inequalities in all the countries of the European Union, but there is also a safety net for everyone who at one time or another falls off the tightrope of the labor market or gets sick. Garrison states are costly because they never stop devising new weapons for their defense. And these weapons systems are now astronomically expensive.

While Sheehan's story is persuasive, he misses one aspect of the transition from the garrison state to the civilian state: the creation of a European human-rights regime. Nearly ten years before the Treaty of Rome got the European Economic Union under way, the Council of Europe, a body of independent states, ceded some of its sovereignty by framing a European Convention on Human Rights. To enforce that convention, a European Court of Human Rights opened its doors in 1950; its decisions must now be written into the laws of member states.

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cle to Turkey's admission to Europe is not just its military. Two other hurdles are its dreadful human rights record and its refusal even to countenance the word "genocide" to describe the extermination of approximately 1 million Armenians. In a way, the Turks are still fighting World War I and trying to defend the honor of the Kemalist revolution that gave birth to modern Turkey

with whom he had fought and suffered during the Battle of the Marne in 1914. Soldiers of peace, he called them, and he was right. The veterans' movement he helped create was one of the strongest voices for pacifism between the two world wars, and he took that position directly into the planning of the post-war world in 1941-1945. For Cassin and millions of others, states that violate

After the disastrous nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986, hundreds of apparatchiks got their families out and then calmed down the populations in Ukraine by saying that nothing dangerous had occurred. Garrison states do that; civilian states cannot.

Recently Walloons and Flamands in Belgium concluded a standoff that left Belgium without a government for months. And yet the absence of a ruling party, indeed the absence of a functioning state or executive power, seemed to make no difference at all to the Belgian people or to anyone. Those who control garrison states matter to the population; those who control civilian states are less important because they can do less damage. Millions of people in Europe today would be happiest if (as in Italy, for instance) they had nothing to do with the state and the state had nothing to do with them.

No, the state is not withering away. It is still robust, but older ideas of sovereignty have gone. The state is no longer "a master in his own castle," as Goebbels liked to say. What is different today, and what is clarified by Sheehan's lucid analysis, is the sense that Europeans no longer have to fear their own states. Their states may be massively incompetent and occasionally corrupt, but they don't murder their own citizens, they don't exterminate, they don't recognize the power to go to war as the bottom line of any definition of what a state is.

We are in James Sheehan's debt for telling us in a powerful narrative how this extraordinary change in the nature of the European state came about. His book is one of those rare publications that makes its readers feel not only better informed but also a bit more intelligent, a bit more humane. The term "humane scholarship" can be a cliché; here it is a description of the best that a historian can offer. **TAP**

Jay Winter, Charles J. Stille Professor of History at Yale University, is the author of 13 books and served as co-writer and chief historian for the PBS Series, The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century.



From an Old Man, a New Europe: René Cassin, at age 81, veteran leader of the human-rights movement

by denying a crime that everybody with eyes to see accepts as historical truth.

It is a pity that Sheehan left the rise of human-rights commitments out of his story, because if he had included them, he would have seen that the post-1945 human-rights movement was a product of many people who learned to hate the garrison state by fighting in its defense. Ex-soldiers were responsible for the transition at the heart of Sheehan's book. The man who presented the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the United Nations in Paris 60 years ago, René Cassin, was a severely wounded veteran of World War I and *un grand Résistant* of World War II. In his last years, he asked that the text of a BBC address he delivered in September 1940 be placed in his coffin in remembrance of the men

human rights are a threat to peace. The European human-rights movement was pre-1945 pacifism projected onto the stage of European law after 1945. This was one of the sources of the judicial reconstruction of Europe.

The role of human-rights law in the making of the new Europe is significant in another way. At the heart of the Helsinki accords of 1975 was the Soviet Union's acceptance of human-rights monitors in exchange for recognition of its western borders. Dissident groups such as Charter 77 and Solidarity drew strength from that human-rights commitment. The fall of the Soviet Union was overdetermined, but surely one element in the story was the growing belief that states cannot deny their citizens human rights in the way the Soviet leadership regularly did.

Is the Game About to Stop?

BY ROBERT B. REICH

THE PROBABILITY OF ANOTHER GREAT DEPRESSION is no higher than 20 percent, but that's too high for comfort. American consumers don't have the buying power they need to absorb the goods and services the U.S. economy is capable of producing. This is likely to mean

fewer jobs, which will force Americans to pull in their belts even tighter, leading to still fewer jobs—the classic recipe for recession. That recession may turn into a full-fledged depression if fiscal and monetary policies can't make up for consumers' lack of buying power. There's reason to worry they cannot because consumers are in a permanent bind. They're deep in debt, their homes are losing value, their paychecks are shrinking.

Under these circumstances, the usual remedies won't work. Tax breaks for businesses won't generate more investment in factories or equipment because demand for their products is dropping. Temporary fixes that give households a one-time cash infusion won't get consumers back to the malls because they know the assistance is temporary and their problems are permanent. They're likely to pocket the extra money instead of spending it. Additional rate cuts by the Federal Reserve Board might give consumers access to somewhat cheaper loans, but there's no going back to the easy money of a few years ago. The values of houses and other major assets are dropping faster than interest rates can be lowered. Growing numbers of homeowners owe more on their mortgages than their homes are now worth.

We're reaping the whirlwind of three decades during which Americans have spent beyond their means and most of the benefits of an expanding economy have gone to a small group at the very

top. The nation's median hourly wage is barely higher than it was 35 years ago. The income of a man in his 30s is now 12 percent below that of a man his age three decades ago. The rich can't keep the economy going because they devote a smaller percentage of their earnings to buying things than the rest of us: They already have most of what they want. Instead of buying, they're more likely to invest their earnings wherever around the world they can get the highest return.

Some say well and good. They think our consumer society is unsustainable. They argue Americans should learn to accept a lower standard of living and American business must adjust to a smaller domestic economy. This argument leaves out one salient fact: The nation has enough productive capacity to provide a higher standard of living for its citizens and also be sustainable. With the right incentives, we could reduce energy use and carbon emissions while continuing to grow at a rate that provides most people with good jobs at good wages. The problem isn't economic growth per se. It's unbalanced growth—too much consumption of goods and services that utilize too much energy and generate

too much carbon into the atmosphere. Balanced growth is surely possible. But if the economy heads into a severe recession or depression, there's almost no way to achieve more balance. Hard-pressed Americans will be unwilling to sacrifice anything.

The debate over widening economic inequality in America usually pits fairness against growth. But the reality we're now facing poses a different question: Can we have any growth at all when income and wealth are so unequal that most Americans can no longer buy what they produce? The answer can be found in the memoirs of Marriner S. Eccles, Franklin D. Roosevelt's chairman of the Federal Reserve from 1934 to 1948, who offered his view on what caused the Great Depression (from *Beckoning Frontiers*, 1951):

"As mass production has to be accompanied by mass consumption, mass consumption, in turn, implies a distribution of wealth—not of existing wealth, but of wealth as it is currently produced—to provide men with buying power equal to the amount of goods and services offered by the nation's economic machinery. Instead

of achieving that kind of distribution, a giant suction pump had by 1929-30 drawn into a few hands an increasing portion of currently produced wealth. This served them as capital accumulations. But by taking purchasing power out of the hands of mass consumers, the savers denied to themselves the kind of effective demand for their products that would justify a reinvestment of their capital accumulations in new plants.

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In consequence, as in a poker game where the chips were concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, the other fellows could stay in the game only by borrowing. When their credit ran out, the game stopped."

Is the game about to stop again? **TAP**